

IRAN'S FOREIGN POLICY  
FROM THE INCEPTION OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
TO THE ĀZARBĀYIJĀN CRISIS

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D  
in the Faculty of Arts,  
University of Edinburgh

1983



Volume One

DECLARATION.

I declare that this thesis is my own work,  
and it has been composed by myself.

Mahmoud Abdullahzadeh.

## II

'When I have applied my mind to politics so that I might examine what belongs to politics with the same freedom of mind as we use for mathematics, I have taken my best pains not to laugh at the actions of mankind, not to groan over them, not to be angry with them, but to understand them.'

Spinoza, *Tractatus Politicus* (1675-77;chap.1:4)

قومی متفکرند اندر ره دین      قومی بگمان فتاده در راه یقین  
میترسم از آنکه بانک آید روزی      کای بیخبران راه نه آنست و نه این

*One lot cogitates on the way of religion,  
Another ponders on the path of mystical certainty;  
But I fear one day the cry will go up,  
'Oh you fools, neither this nor that is the way!'*

( *The Ruba'iyat Of Omar Khayyam, Translated By Peter Avery and John Heath-Stubbs* ).



### III

#### ABSTRACT.

The primary objective of this thesis is to study empirically Iran's foreign policy from the inception of the Second World War in September 1939 to the collapse of the Āzarbāyījān Government in December 1946, with particular emphasis on domestic politics whose international dimensions frequently determined the core of Iran's foreign policy. This study reveals a striking consistency in the original pattern of Iran's foreign policy, although after the débâcle of Riżā Shāh various antagonistic forces appeared on the Iranian political scene as well as the presence of foreign troops in the country.

The study begins with an analysis of Riżā Shāh's policy of neutrality, which was adopted soon after the outbreak of the war, and Iran's relations with Germany, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain during the last two years of his reign. It is suggested that the policy of neutrality was the best policy to be adopted at the time, and at the same time it was the only policy left to the Iranian Government, because none of the belligerent powers approached the Government with a view of entering into an alliance with Iran.

After the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran, a tripartite treaty of alliance was concluded between Iran, Britain, and Russia, according to which Iran officially became allied with those two powers. Under this treaty, Iran declared support for the Allies' cause. But at the same time she pursued her undeclared policy which was to keep her relations with the Axis,

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in particular with Germany, through a number of secret pro-Axis organisations set up inside the country with Berlin connections. I have called this undeclared policy "the last policy of reinsurance with the Axis". When the fortunes of the war began to turn against Germany, Iran also began to abandon the last policy of reinsurance by declaring war against Germany, but at the same time she started a search for another power in order to compensate for the loss of Germany. In other words, Iran was anxious to keep the original pattern of her foreign policy unchanged - only Germany would be replaced by another third power. This time the natural choice for Iran was the United States to take over the position of Germany in Iran's politics.

Sensing this "new" development - Iran's search for a third power- the Soviet Union found the moment opportune to set up a regime in the north on the Soviet model. To achieve this aim, the Soviet Government first began with a revival of an old claim concerning petroleum rights in the Dasht-i Kavīr-i Khūriyan area, and later, with a demand for an oil concession in a vast area in the north, stretching from Āzarbāyījān to Khurāsān. Once having failed to obtain the concession, the Soviet Government encouraged and supported the establishment of the Āzarbāyījān Government which collapsed after one year. Once more Iran's calculated and diligent foreign policy succeeded to preserve the country's territorial integrity and independence.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my great debt to my Supervisor, Professor L.P.Elwell-Sutton, who kindly and patiently encouraged me and supervised this research throughout. Without his moral support and assistance I would not have been able to overcome my problems. I must also thank my second Supervisor, Professor J.D.Latham, for his help and encouragement.

I am most grateful to Dr.Carole Hillenbrand who gave me tremendous moral support during this research.

My thanks and gratitude are also extended to Miss I. Crawford, the Secretary of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Edinburgh University, who was extremely helpful, and Mrs. E.Nuttall for typing this thesis with great efficiency.

I would also like to thank the staff of Edinburgh University Library, Tehran University Library, and the Controller, H.M.Stationery Office in Britain, for permission to quote from unpublished Foreign Office documents at the Public Record Office and the India Office in London. Finally, I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the financial assistance of the Tahereh Research Centre.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SOURCES

To carry out this research I had to build up a conceptual framework as a guide line. Like any research of this nature, a number of hypotheses and questions had to be put before and during the research in order to find out their proof and answers by empirical gains. Without this conceptual framework it would have been like wandering about in a Kavir (desert) of documents, whilst lacking a chart or compass to attain the journey's end.

The core of this framework was to find answers to the question of how foreign policy originates and evolves, particularly in a developing nation-state.

Foreign policy does not originate in a vacuum. Is it the internal politics that dictate it or is it a number of policies formulated as a response to external behaviour in an international system? The answer would be "a combination of both". But we have to differentiate between the foreign policy making of big powers and that of small, underdeveloped nation states. In the case of the latter groups, foreign policy often originates entirely from domestic politics. The chief objective of the foreign policies of these nations is twofold: (a) to preserve their territorial integrity, independence and security, and (b) to achieve, if possible, a greater degree of economic development. Most of these nation states do not even have regional interests, let alone continental or global ones. In those nation states which have highly personalised authoritarian regimes, foreign policy is often formulated as to protect the ruler or the



governing élites, and also to give them a free hand to deal with internal security. The threats to internal security are domestic in origin or emanate from the attitude of neighbouring powers. Therefore, it is mainly the domestic situation which dictates foreign policy in these countries where, like anywhere, it is also influenced by the characteristics of the ruler or the country's elite. But in these countries this influence is almost deterministic in shaping their foreign policies, because, unlike the developed nation states, the voice of the media, public opinion, and the opposition is virtually non-existent. The foreign policies of Riżā Shāh, Nehru, Nasser and the late Shāh are perhaps the best examples, without mentioning Idi Amin, Jean-Bédél Bokassa and Pol Pot. Therefore, there is always the danger that a foreign policy analyst who is obsessed with analysing the interaction rather than the action of a nation state in the international system (i.e. the domestic sources of its foreign policy are ignored), will lose his way. To minimise this danger, an attempt has been made in this research to put emphasis on domestic affairs or politics (e.g. the characteristics of élites, political parties, the Majlis, elections, the cabinets, the Court, etc.) wherever it has seemed necessary. For instance, I have discussed at length the pro-Axis organisations in Iran. Without knowing about the strength, influence, and structure of these organisations, it would be difficult to comprehend exactly why the Iranian Government pursued a pro-Axis policy.

However, in the case of Iran, this research shows that her foreign policy did not evolve exclusively out of the domestic

politics, but external factors also influenced its development. Typical examples of these external factors were the traditional Soviet menace to security and territorial integrity of Iran, and the Anglo-Russian rivalry in that country.

In short, I have approached Iran's domestic politics, in this research, not as a subject in itself, but as one of the factors for the shaping of her foreign policy.

This thesis draws almost entirely on primary sources. These sources are divided into unpublished and published materials. The unpublished sources have been collected from the Public Record Office (PRO) and the India Office Library and Records in London. I also succeeded in obtaining a limited number of photo-copies of Iranian documents, for the years 1939-1941, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But when in the summer of 1979 I referred to that Ministry for further research into their documents, permission was not granted.

The Foreign Office's unpublished materials used here are listed under F0371 and F0248 (Persia, 34) and kept at the PRO. Most of the files for the period 1939- 1946, inclusive, under F0248 (Embassy and Consular Archives) are closed for fifty years, and those which are open, contain similar or identical documents to those under F0371. There are also many single documents and a number of files under F0371 that are closed for fifty or seventy-five years. But, on the whole, they hardly exceed two percent of the total volume of documents, kept at the PRO for this period. Apart from these, there are files kept at the India Office and Records under L/P&S/12. Here again, most of the documents are identical to those of the PRO. They

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are reproduced copies of documents which were repeated to India by the FO, DO or the British embassies through the IO and vice versa. However, where I have had indential documents from the PRO and IOL, the PRO (F0371) file has been given as the reference. The file numbers in the bibliography are strictly those I have read and used for this research.

The published primary materials used here can generally be divided into two groups. The first group contains documents from the German Foreign Ministry, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, and the US State Department. The second group includes publications from the UN, the Iranian Foreign Ministry, the Azarbayijan Government, Royal Institute of International Affairs, the British Government, Hansard, and a number of books containing documents - all listed in the bibliography.

The German and Australian documents cover the 1939-41 period. The US State Department's materials on Iran are the most voluminous in comparison with the other two sources. But the US documents cover the period 1940-47 with over two thousand pages in seven volumes. The volumes on the Potsdam Conference, Malta and Yalta, and Cairo and Tehran Conferences must be added to this list.

The most interesting but perhaps difficult part of this research was the comparative study of these materials from different origins, particularly the comparison between the documents of the British Foreign Office and the US State Department. Many cases could be found in which the legations of these two countries had reported on identical events or



topics from Tihran, each giving its own interpretations, comments and verdicts which often contradicted those of the other. In these cases I have tried in this thesis to draw balanced conclusions. This double checking is almost totally absent in the existing literature in this field, particularly in Ramazani's book (Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1978) which is supposed to be the only systematic study of Iran's foreign policy.

It must be mentioned that there was less cohesion in views expressed by the US Legation reporting from Tihran than the British Legation during this period. This was probably because the US State Department appointed two Ministers and two Ambassadors between 1939 and 1947 (Dreyfus, Morris, Murray, and Allen), whereas Sir Reader Bullard, the British Minister and Ambassador in Tihran was only replaced by Sir John Le Rougetel in early 1946, neither of whom have, however, left any diaries or mémoires.

The Iranian newspapers and periodicals have furnished this research with valuable information on events, policies of the Government, political parties, and personalities. Between 1941 and 1947, some 464 dailies, weeklies and monthlies appeared in Iran, mostly in Persian but some in Turkish, Armenian, English, French, Kurdish, Russian and Polish as well. To plough through all these papers was impracticable, if not impossible. But to find them all under one roof was indeed impossible. Some were kept at the Press Library of the Central Library of Tihran University, some at the library of the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the same university,

and some in the Millī and Majlis libraries. However, a number of these papers could not be found on the shelves of these libraries. Access was granted to me to read them in the private collections and libraries of friends who gave me the opportunity and who will, however, remain anonymous as well as those I informally interviewed.

The article ("The Iranian Press, 1941-1947") by Professor Elwell-Sutton was very helpful in this research. It provides the reader with a short history of each paper and its ideological leaning. Considering the number of newspapers, it was, therefore, decided to select, in the first stage, a number of newspapers listed in the article (The Iranian Press) from each political range: the rightist, neutrals, and the leftists. This selection contained the names of almost sixty newspapers, but only forty-five could be found in practice. Yet, to find all the issues of each paper (listed in the bibliography) was impossible. Either most of these papers had been suppressed at least once between 1941 and 1947; hence there was a gap between issues, or in almost all of the collections at those libraries, a number of issues of each newspaper were missing. Reading these newspapers one should, however, be sceptical.

Secondary sources include a vast range of books and articles relevant to the period under study as well as a number of books which provide a general study of foreign policy.

Khātirahā (Mémoires) edited by Ismā'īl Vālīzāda is a collection of mémoires of twenty-eight Iranian statesmen who served under the Pahlavis. Each mémoire sheds light on

obscure or untold moments of the modern history of Iran, and each has naturally its own bias. As a whole, the book is a unique collection of mémoires and documents in Persian.

Asirān is the name of a book by Nūrullāh Lārūdī, an employee of the Iranian Finance Ministry in Shīrāz in 1942 who was arrested and interned by Iranian and British authorities for his pro-Axis activities. The book contains interesting information about the other internees and the internment camps. It is a stream of coarse invectives.

Aussenhandel und Aussenwirtschaftspolitik des Iran by Abolfazl Adli is a very good analysis of Iran's foreign trade and policy between 1930 and 1960. The author discusses from an economic point of view without making politically biased comments. The book is abundant in statistical tables and materials for the period 1930-1960.

Unlike the above book, Die Wirtschafts-und Handelsbeziehungen Zwischen Iran und dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Reich by Ahmad Mahrād discusses Iran's trade relations with the National Socialist regime of Germany during Rīzā Shāh's regime from a political point of view. On the whole, the argument presented in this book is neither scientific nor cohesive. It is more or less a combination of the author's personal views, and a number of German documents which could be useful for other purposes.

A recently published book by Ervand Abrahamian, Iran Between Two Revolution, deals with Iranian history and politics from the beginning of this century up to 1978-9. Perhaps the main and best part of the book is the part which covers the

period 1941-47, for which the author has had access to primary sources, e.g. the FO's documents. The book represents a Marxist interpretation of Iranian history, though the author seems to have adopted E.P. Thompson's neo-Marxist approach for his interpretation. As mentioned, the book generally discusses Iran's internal politics, but it, inevitably, covers parts of Iran's foreign relations as well. The main problem with this book is the author's confusion in putting facts and events in their proper place. For instance, Abrahamian attributes the bread riots of December 8 and 9, 1942 partly to the opposition of the bazaar guilds to the tax bill drafted by Millspaugh (p.183). In fact, Millspaugh came to Iran at the end of January 1943 and the tax reform bill was initiated months after his arrival. Therefore, there was no connection whatsoever between the bread riots of December 1942 and Millspaugh's tax bill. Again, Abrahamian states that Qavam "was willing both to print the necessary bank notes and arrest the pro-German officials" (p.182). On the contrary, Qavām was very reluctant to do so.

The merit of the book is, however, its use of unpublished documents of the FO and documents from the US State Department. Had Abrahamian consulted more British and US documents and made a proper balance between them, his statements and conclusions would have been, perhaps, more accurate.

An objective and analytical study of Iran's political history for the period 1939-1947 is represented in Modern Iran (Chapters 20-25) by Peter Avery. Although the book does not



directly discuss Iran's foreign policy, it provides an analysis of the domestic politics, which is vital for better understanding of the country's foreign relations.

R.K.Ramazani's Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973 is the book which specifically discusses Iran's foreign policy. As its title suggests, the book deals with four decades of Iran's foreign policy. Consequently the period of 1939-47 could not perhaps be discussed in a more elaborated form than the present one. The problem with this work, like many others, is the total reliance on one governmental primary source - US State Department's documents. The book gives the impression that it has been written mainly for American readers, and the emphasis has been put on Iran-US relations. Due to the lack of access to British documents, the author has frequently drawn biased or inaccurate conclusions. In spite of this short-coming, this work is the only systematic study of Iran's foreign policy.

Similarly, the Ph.D theses by K.Tabari, Iran's policies toward the United States During the Anglo-Russian Occupation 1941-1946, and M.W. Partin, US-Iranian Relations 1945-1947, have relied totally on US documents and secondary sources. Both have exaggerated Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran and put naturally too much emphasis on the role of the US in Iran's foreign policy.

Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948 by G. Lenczowski is an old but useful book, part of which gives a descriptive as well as objective account of this period (1939-1947).



General Arfa's mémoire, Under Five Shahs, reveals less known facts, although some of them must genuinely be verified.

A Russian view of this period has been given by M.S. Ivanov, Neoveishaya istoriya Irana.

Persian Oil, by L.P.Elwell-Sutton is an analytical study of Iranian oil history. But it also partly covers Iran's foreign relations during this period. The author is sympathetic to the Iranian cause.

B.Rubin's book, Paved with good intentions, concentrates on US-Iran relations. The primary sources used in this book are American documents. The whole purpose of the book is to portray US relations with Iran in a very favourable way as a reaction, perhaps, to the prevailing anti-American feeling in Iran after the "revolution" of 1978-9.

An article (1942-1976: The Reign of Muhammad Riza Shah) by R. Greaves in Amirsadeghi's (ed.) Twentieth Century Iran, covers part of the period 1939-47. It utilises unpublished primary sources from the FO and US State Department documents. The problem with this article is the selection of only those FO's documents which suited the purpose of the book which was sponsored by Amirsadeghi, a son of the late Shah's chauffeur.

There are many articles about Iran's politics and history published in well-known journals. Three articles on Iran's political parties of this period by L.P.Elwell-Sutton, F. Machalsky (both in English), and G.D'Erme (in Italian)

discuss the interaction between the parties themselves and the Government. The article by Machalski is very sympathetic to the Tuda Party, like the one by R.Shahshahani, The Background of the Iranian Affair.

Abrahamian's article, Factionalism in Iran: Political groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46), is an interesting study of the interaction between political fractions in the 14th Majlis, which in fact constituted a new era in the political life of Iran's Parliament. The uniqueness of this article is its use of unpublished primary sources of the FO.

Another article by Abrahamian, Communism and Communalism in Iran: The Tudah and the Firqah-i Dimukrat, is a comparative sociological as well as political study of these two parties. The author concludes that these parties are different in origin and objective. This conclusion is of course debatable. It is known that those who were at first members of the Tūda party in Āzarbāyījān joined the Firqa'i Dimukrat when it was founded in 1945.

In connection with the role of the US in Iran's foreign policy, the article by Hess, The Iranian crisis of 1945-46 and the Cold War, exaggerates this role and the US involvement in Iran's affairs, while both articles by S.L. McFarland, A peripheral view of the origins of the Cold War: The Crises in Iran 1941-41, and J.Ph.Rosenberg, The Cheshire Ultimatum: Truman's Message to Stalin in the 1946 Azerbaijan Crisis, discount any US ultimatum to the Soviet Union over this crisis.

An attempt had been made to list in the bibliography only those articles and books which were chiefly totally or

partly relevant to the period of this research.

This thesis contains nine chapters, a conclusion, and five appendices. The first chapter discusses an analysis of Iran's policy of neutrality announced after the outbreak of the Second World War, and the country's relations with Germany, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain during the last two years of Rīzā Shāh's reign, and it also demonstrates how a foreign propaganda campaign was carried out in Iran during these years, and its effect on Iran's foreign policy.

Chapter two discusses British-Soviet policies vis-à-vis Iran's policy of neutrality, and the secret negotiations carried on behind the scenes between Britain and Russia which resulted in the occupation of Iran in August 1941.

Chapter three contains revealing facts on British policy with regard to the restoration of the Qajar dynasty after the collapse of Rīzā Shāh, and it shows how this policy was not implemented after all.

In Chapter four, an analysis has been given of Iran's foreign policy after Rīzā Shāh, the Anglo-Russian zones of occupation in Iran, the internal situation, and the conclusion of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance between Iran, Britain and Russia in January 1942.

Chapter five deals with the new developments in Iran's relations with the Allies, the Allies' demands which resulted in food and currency crises in 1942 and their adverse effects on Iran's policy towards Britain.

Chapter six gives an account of Iran's relations with the Axis, the German plot and pro-Axis organisations in Iran. This

chapter discusses how and why Iran kept her close relations with Germany despite being officially allied with Britain and Russia by the treaty.

Chapter seven, although discussing domestic politics, the elections of the Fourteenth Majlis, which was not, however, totally free from British and Russian interference, and the return of Sayyid Ziyā, is an introduction for the next two chapters. The Fourteenth Majlis influenced the shaping of Iran's foreign policy but it could not change its pattern, although it was an assembly filled with pro-Soviet, pro-British, pro-American, pro-monarchy, and neutral Deputies.

Chapters eight and nine discuss the "new" trends in Iran's foreign policy: the rejection of the Soviet demand for an oil concession, and the Āzarbāyījān crisis respectively. The general conclusion of these two chapters is to show how and why Iran's foreign policy evolved without its original pattern being changed.

Appendix one presents a short "who's who" of the Iranian statesmen and personalities who were instrumental in shaping or executing Iran's foreign policy from the early years of the present century until 1947.

Appendices two, three, and five contain photo-copies of published and unpublished documents which have been given as further references.

Appendix four is a supplement to Chapter seven. It can be itself expanded into a thesis. It is an alphabetical (Persian) list of the political parties and trade unions which appeared between 1941 and 1947 with a short description of each party



or organisation. This appendix also contains an analytical list of the Fourteenth Majlis Deputies.

With the exception of the name of the country "Iran", all Persian names of people and places as well as words and sentences have been transliterated according to the system used by The Cambridge History of Iran. The Christian equivalents of the Iranian dates have been shown in brackets.

Finally, in spite of being greatly enlightened and amused by the revealing facts kept inside the secret files, I have not been tempted to agree with Sardou, the 19th century French playwright, in whose play "Diplomacy" we are led to understand that the fates of nations are settled by secret papers which are passed into the "snowy bosom of a traitorous bathykolp".

Chapter OneI. Policy of Neutrality.

## I

Soon after the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, the Iranian Government declared a policy of neutrality towards the belligerent powers, which was published and all foreign missions were so informed. The policy could fairly be described as a frantic neutrality.

Some argued that the Iranian Government by adopting this policy, had, in fact, neglected moral issues involved in the war. This argument could, somehow, be justified. The British Minister, Bullard, in conversation with the Crown Prince, showed that these issues made little appeal, if none, to the Iranian public and the Government. In his interview the Prince's attitude, Bullard described, was, roughly, that the war had been a nuisance and ought not to have been allowed to happen. 'Only Danzig' stood between the world and peace, the Prince remarked upon. He continued by saying that it was a great pity Germany had been 'driven into the arms of Russia'. Bullard believed that this represented in condensed form his father's - Rīzā Shāh - view of the war. Bullard wrote;

'...It was easy to show that something more than Danzig stood between the world and peace; and easy to quote the analogy of the last war when Germany would have welcomed peace proposals while she remained in possession of part of France and nearly the whole of Belgium. But his Highness was evidently not convinced and became no more cheerful.'<sup>1</sup>

The men, who had witnessed the fate of Iran in the last war, and were beginning to see the determination of the western democracies to fight fascism to an end, doubted the wisdom of adopting such a policy. The American Chargé d'affairs, Engert, in Tihhrān concluded the reason for taking that policy by the Shāh was this;

'... Self interest being the determining factor in the Shah's policy he dreads the thought of being obliged to sign any defensive pacts with either Great Britain or Russia.'<sup>2</sup>

To describe the Shāh's policy merely based on 'self interest' is perhaps to do him an injustice. He had seen the last war during which Iran was quite unable, even had her Government so intencioned, to preserve her neutrality; each side violated Iranian territory, accusing the other of having begun it. Therefore, this alone had sufficed to make the Shāh and his Government resolve to maintain strictly the declared neutrality. Thus the Government-controlled press was allowed to publish no independent comments on the progress of the war, but was forced to content itself with printing extracts from news agency reports.

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1. Bullard to Lord Halifax (Foreign Office, hereafter referred to as (FO).), January 26, 1940, E827,F0371/24570.
  2. Engert to Secretary of State (SOS), October 23, 1939, Foreign Relations of the United States; Diplomatic paper, 1940, p.624. vol.III. (Hereafter cited as US.F.R.)

Listening to foreign radios was officially forbidden in public places though little notice appeared to be taken of this edict except in Tih̄rān. For instance, to show its adherence to the policy, the Government went even so far as to accomodate the representatives of the rival powers in two different halls at the inauguration of the new session of the twelfth Majlis on October 26, 1939. The representatives of neutral countries were divided amongst the belligerent.<sup>3</sup> On the same occasion Riżā Shāh announced his government policy towards the war, and added;

'.....a subject for regret is the state of war in Europe. Although the policy of our government is one of absolute neutrality.'<sup>4</sup>

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During the period 1939 - 1940, the impression given by Iranian officials was that Iran would defend the policy if she had to resort to force or Iran would fight anyone who breached her neutrality.

In early February 1940 there appeared in the Tih̄rān newspaper 'It̄tilā'āt' an article in reply to articles which were alleged to have been published about the foreign policy of Iran in the Daily Telegraph and World Federation published in Tokyo. The former wrote, 'Iran is afraid of being attacked', while a certain Indian named Mahendra Pratap Rajah stated in the journal, that Iran and Afghanistan should

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3. Bullard to Lord Halifax (FO), Feb. 10, 1940, E 584/584/34, FO 371/25581.

4. Muzākīrāti Majlis shuray-i Milli, daura-yi Davāzdāhum, cited in Donald Wilber, Riża Shāh, p.193.



go to war. Ittīlā'āt's article, undoubtedly inspired by the government authorities, declared; 'if the Iranians have adopted a policy of neutrality it is not from fear - a word unknown to the descendants of their brave ancestors who made the plains of Central Asia resound with their cries - but from the desire to devote all their energies to the prosperity of the beloved fatherland.' ...This spirit, however, will last only so long as the rights of Iran are respected by others.'

A day earlier than the article published, the Iranian Minister of war said to the British Military Attaché, in Tīhrān, that the time had come for both countries to discuss a common plan in order to save mutual interests, though he could not himself put the suggestion to the Shāh. He thought that it would come best through the diplomatic channel.

Whether or not any connection existed between the Minister of war's conversation and the appearance of the article, was a matter of speculation. Bullard wrote: 'It is perhaps hardly a coincidence that this article appeared the day after the Minister of war's speaking "personally and confidentially" to the military attaché to this legation.' Then Bullard concluded, "This invitation, which could hardly have been made without the Shāh's approval, is remaining 'private and confidential'.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Bullard to Lord Halifax, secret, Feb. 6, 1940, E 829/621/34, FO 371/24582.

"Iran" newspaper of February 3, 1940, published a letter to the editor, in which the writer implied that the concentration of troops in Khūzistān showed that Iran would be able to protect her neutrality and defend her frontiers against the evil intentions of foreigners.

Obviously the object of the letter was to warn foreign powers to expect resistance if they attacked Iran. But the surprising point in the letter was that it had spoken of the military preparation in the south rather than in the north, whereas the immediate menace was from the north. According to Bullard's interpretation the object was after all to warn Russia, but to leave a way of retreat, so that if the Soviet Government asked about these boasted preparations, the Iranian Government might reply; "No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir."<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the policy of neutrality was discreetly implemented. It was not until August of 1941, when Iran was occupied, that the need to initiate new diplomacy became far more discernible.

An account of Iran's relationships with Germany, the Soviet Union, and Britain, during the period of 1939-1940, may throw lights on events which led to the Anglo-Russian occupation of August 1941.

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6. Ibid.

## II. Relations with Germany.

### I

During the last years of his reign, Riżā Shāh adopted a policy of intimacy with Germany. This policy could serve his two main purposes. Firstly, it would help the Shāh to proceed with his programme of industrialization, and, secondly, Germany could politically be played off against the Soviet Union.

To serve the first purpose, Germany was welcomed to participate in various industrial projects, commercial activities, and trade in Iran. With regard to the second objective, Germany seemed to be the only possible choice of the Shāh to offset the Soviet Union's pressure, because the United States' idealistic policies of non-entanglement and non-intervention, which were still as much applicable in Iran as in the 19th century, had made the Shāh fully conscious of the political implications of such policies. As to Great Britain, her declining influences and prestige in Iran, becoming evident from the end of World War I, had, further decreased during Riżā Shāh's reign. Therefore, the remaining power was Germany who could act as a counter-balance to Iran's neighbouring powers, without showing any sign of apparent political interest in her affairs.

The booming trade with Germany became apparent from the mid 1930's.<sup>7</sup> Germany not only supplied Iran with industrial material and finished goods of all types, but also took by far the greater proportion of her exports. In the Iranian fiscal year of 1319 - March 21, 1940 - March 20, 1941 - Germany became the biggest exporter to Iran with a total of 370,630,604 Rls. ( £1,647,270 ), or 41 percent of the total of commercial imports. In the same year Germany was the biggest buyer of Iranian produce, the total amounting to 67,405 tons, valued at 442,883,260 Rls. (£6,748,180 ), a record figure, representing 47 percent of the total commercial exports.<sup>8</sup>

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7. (a) Abolfazl Adli demonstrates the increasing role of Germany in Iran's foreign trade until Hitler became the country's main trading partner by 1938-1939, see, Aussenhandel und Aussenwirtschafts politik des Iran, pp. 49-50, 61, 65-66.
- (b) Yair Hirschfeld, on the contrary, shows an analysis of a reduction rather than increase of Germany's role in Iran during the National Socialist as contrasted with the Weimar period, see, "German policy towards Iran: Continuity and Change from Weimar to Hitler, 1919-1939", pp. 117-141.
- (c) For Iran-Germany economic and trade relations during 1933-1941, see also Ahmad Mahrad, Die Wirtschafts-und dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Reich. This book contains many documents about economic relations between the two countries.
8. (a) Tableau Général, Iranian Customs Administration, 1319; extracts in E 1178/35/34, January 22, 1942. FO 371/31399.
- (b) G. Lenczowski notices that the share of German trade was higher than the official figures published by the Iranian Government in, e.g., Statistique annulaire du Commerce extérieur de l'Iran. Because the Iranian authorities did not count those German goods imported via Tribosond and Istanbul, or via England and India as German, but as Turkish, British or Indian, See, Russia and the West in Iran, p.157.
- (c) Russian analysis of the Irano-German trade has shown in M.S. Ivanov, Noveishaya istoriya Irana (M.S. Ivanov, The Modern History of Iran), Persian Translation, p.91.



As the result of Germany's economic performance and technical assistance, closer political relations were established between the two countries, but Rīzā Shāh never inclined Iran's foreign policy unduly to favour Germany.

"....Hitler's occupation policies in Europe showed my father the dangers of ever allowing Iran to become a German satellite", wrote the late Shāh, ".... a leader who himself had authoritarian tendencies, my father resented another dictator' such as Hitler".<sup>9</sup>

By the end of 1939 there was, however, a lag in the delivery of German goods in exchange for Iranian exports. The Iranian Government claimed that when the war broke out Germany was indebted to Iran under the clearing system of some 40 million Reichmarks.

In September 1939, the Iranian Minister of Finance, Mahmūd Badir<sup>10</sup> expressed to the German Minister, Dr. Smend, the desire of his government to keep trade with Germany on at least the same level of 1938, even if possible to expand it.<sup>11</sup> But this could not be fulfilled while there was a transportation problem.

The British Government's decision to seize German goods destined to Iran, had left the transit route by only way of Russia. Although Iran had a claim on Russia for the transit of Iranian goods according to the treaty of 1921, Russian

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9. Pahlavi, H.I.M. Mohammed Reza, Mission for my country, p.67.

10. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 509.

11. Smend to the Foreign Ministry (Germany), Sept.6,1939, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 Series D, No.14, vol.VIII, (Hereafter cited as German Foreign Policy), p.13.

obstruction had, for many years, made the use of a such transit impracticable.

To solve this problem Badir suggested that the transit problem should be solved through a Russo-German agreement. Subsequently, the German Minister assured Badir that, " everything would be done to maintain the level of German deliveries", and, efforts would be made to reach an understanding with Russia in respect to the transit problem.<sup>12</sup>

Such understanding reached between Germany and the Soviet Union on the basis of the Moscow Agreement of September 28, 1939. And the Iranian Government was so informed. Although some members of the Iranian Government "felt grave doubts as to the dependability of the Soviet assurances regarding transit".<sup>13</sup>

The problem of transit and trade with Germany were put to a lengthy cabinet meeting, with the Shāh presiding. The Deputy Minister of Trade, Vāsiqī,<sup>14</sup> expressed his view on the Iranian Government that could no longer justify allowing the economy to gravitate towards Germany by preference to the extent provided by the Iranian-German economic agreement concluded in 1938.<sup>15</sup> He believed that

12. Ibid, f.n.(6).

13. Memorandum by an Official of the Economic Policy Department, Berlin, Oct.28, 1939. German Foreign Policy, No.312, vol.VIII, p.353.

14. See Personalities, Appendix I, p.535

15. German Foreign Policy, No.312, op.cit.

Iran had to look for other markets and sources of supply, namely Japan and Italy.<sup>16</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Muzaffar Afshar;<sup>17</sup> while agreeing with Vasiqī, voiced his fear of aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union towards Iran and Afghanistan. Badir, on the contrary, opposed the ministers, and emphasized that "it was absolutely necessary to adhere to the present policy". Finally, the Shāh rounded off the meeting by saying that "the political and economic policies with reference to Germany should be maintained as heretofore, unless it should be proved that this would be to Iran's disadvantage".<sup>18</sup>

In October 1939, the British Government eased its policy in connection with the seizure of German goods destined to Iran. The British Minister gave assurances to the Government of Iran that his government would not confiscate German goods, even war material, being transported to Iran in neutral ships, if they had already become the property of the Iranian Government. This decision relaxed the tension among the members of the cabinet, though Badir suspected the reliability of such assurances.<sup>19</sup>

On October 25, the Shāh changed the cabinet, probably because of Badir's strong pro-German stance. Mahmūd Jam,<sup>20</sup>

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16. Ibid. Italy and Japan had shown their willingness to take over important German deliveries and imports with all of the German stipulations. Particularly Japan was interested to take over the agreement of July 11, 1939 between Christian Dierid A.G. Langen-bielau, and the Iranian cotton Goods Company, according to which Germany had to import 10,000 tons of cotton in return for German cotton goods in an amount equal to the value of the raw cotton.

17. See Personalities, Appendix I, p.502.

18. German Foreign Policy, No.312, op.cit.

19. Ibid.

20. See Personalities, Appendix I, p.515.

who had been the Prime Minister since 1935, was appointed as Minister of Court, the post vacant since the fall of Taimūrtāsh. This appointment seemed likely to be one of honour rather than great influence. Badir was replaced by General Amīr Khusrauvi,<sup>21</sup> the Governor of the Bank Millī, with whom he had carried on a long contest for control of the Government's financial operations.

The new cabinet was formed by Dr. Ahmad Matīn Daftari,<sup>22</sup> the youthful Minister of Justice in the former cabinet.

## II

During 1940 the German policy concerning the delivery of arms did not change. Hitler's Government was aware of the short-term benefit of the Shāh's neutrality since the Germans believed that the British wished the war to be spread to the Middle East. The Germans also believed that Rīzā Shāh would only maintain this policy if his army was strong enough.

The Army had been equipped almost entirely by Skoda and Brno, the Swedish firm of Bofors. The Shāh had endeavoured to buy armaments from small states which were not in a position to exert undue influences on Iran. But the disappearance of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent take over of Skoda works by the German firm, Krupp, was a severe blow to the Shāh, and he became even more dependent

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21. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 504.

22. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 532.



on Germany than before. Therefore, he needed Germany's aid with respect to material for the expansion of the Army.

The conclusion of the trade agreement with the Soviet Union in March 1940 assured Germany of the Shāh's good intentions in reducing tensions in this part of the world.

The German Minister wrote to Berlin:

" I am convinced that, especially since the conclusion of the treaty with the Soviet Union, Iran is in fact a valuable guarantor for preventing the spread of war in the Middle East. There is no doubt as to the sincerity of the Shah's policy, and I urgently recommend every possible accomodation in the delivery of armaments".<sup>23</sup>

The relevant documents show the shipments of arms to Iran were carried out throughout 1940.<sup>24</sup>

### III

By the end of 1940, tensions arose among the members of the Iranian Government by the Berlin visit of Molotov in November. British propaganda in Iran operated with the slogan "Iran sold by Germany to the Soviet Union". This succeeded in disturbing official Iranian circles and merchants. The British slogan was not unfounded. Apparently, Iran was not discussed on that occasion. But the basic agreement between the two countries, concerning spheres of influence of the Axis powers and Russia, implicitly included that country.

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23. German Foreign Policy. Secret, March 19, 1940, No.3, vol.IX, 1940, p.17.

24. German Foreign Policy. Microfilm, serials; 4809 and 9662.

On November 13, the Reich Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop put to Molotov the contents of the agreement outlined by him, and added that beside this agreement a secret agreement could also be concluded establishing the focal points in the territorial aspirations of the four countries. "The focal points in the territorial aspirations of the Soviet Union would presumably be centered south of the territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean".<sup>25</sup>

The outline of this 'secret agreement' was vague. It did not specify Iran or Afghanistan and did not make it clear whether both were included in Soviet territorial aspiration. This vagueness was, of course, deliberate, because, the German Foreign Ministry felt that if unavoidable, Russia could have a foothold on the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan, British Baluchistan, and Iranian Baluchistan but not through Iran.<sup>26</sup>

Upon his return to Moscow, Molotov submitted to the German Ambassador, Schulenburg, the Soviet counter proposals and amendments to the German draft. According to the Soviet Union proposals, the German draft " would have to be amended so as to stipulate the centre of the aspirations of the Soviet Union south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf".<sup>27</sup>

Molotov received no reply from Germany in respect to the amendment. On various occasions, his enquiries about

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25. Secret, Nov.18, 1940. German Foreign Policy, No.329, vol. XI, p.565.

26. Political Report, May 19, 1940. German Foreign Policy, No.277, vol. IX, p.383.

27. Top secret, Nov. 26, 1940. German Foreign Policy, No. 404, vol.XI, pp. 714-15.

the lack of response were answered by the German Ambassador, explaining that Germany had to discuss the matter with her allies. But the truth was the German Government desire to avoid if possible any final formulation and commitment.

However, the Iranian Government's tension slackened when the German Minister, Ettel, in Tīhrān assured the Government that Iran had not been discussed at the time of Molotov's visit to Berlin, and that propaganda was part of British intrigues.

### III. Relations with the Soviet Union.

#### I

Still, when the war broke out, the commercial agreement which had lapsed in 1938, had not been concluded between the two countries.

The origin of this dispute must be sought in the economic treaty of August 27, 1935, of which different interpretations were made by the two countries. In June 1939, the Iranian Government informed the Soviet authorities that they no longer considered the treaty to be in effect.

For many years Russian markets had been a natural outlet for agricultural products of the northern provinces of Iran. This dependence on Russian purchases had grown since the beginning of the century so that Russia's share in Iran's foreign trade in 1938, before the termination of the treaty, had reached an exorbitant figure of 38 percent. Therefore, the Iranian Government, partly because of the adverse effects on the economy, endeavoured to re-open negotiations, through their Ambassador in Moscow, in late 1938, for a new trade agreement more in conformity with Iranian wishes. But they failed. Hence, the relations between the two countries further deteriorated. The outbreak of war made it advisable for the Iranian Government to approach, once more, Moscow for fresh mutual understanding on the basis of the treaty of 1935. The Iranian Government



proposed that the treaty of 1935 be put into effect until a new agreement had been negotiated. Moreover, the Government demanded that the principle of complete compensation should be made the basis of trade between the two countries. The Soviet Government rejected it and asked Iran to abolish the quotas on Soviet imports, allowing them to make purchases from individuals or firms direct instead of from the Iranian monopolies. It was blatantly obvious that the Iranian Government could not concede to such an inexorable demand, partly because of its political implications.

However, the negotiations dragged on for months with little hope of success. In October 1939, the Iranian Foreign Minister approached the German Minister, requesting Germany to exert pressure to bear on Russia in Moscow and possibly from Berlin "so that they would arrive at an economic understanding with Iran".<sup>28</sup> Germany welcomed the Iranian request. The Reich Government considered that economic co-operation between Iran and Russia would eventually benefit German - Iranian trade. Moreover, they realized that the growing tension between Iran and Russia might lead the latter to resort to an aggressive action against Iran, such action would doubtless drive her into the hands of the British; i.e., Germany's enemy. Therefore, Germany seemed to be particularly concerned to see less

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28. German Foreign Policy, No.312, op.cit.

friction between Iran and Russia. A German official wrote:

".... considering Turkey's strong ties with England and France it appears politically especially important at this particular moment to continue to strengthen Iran in her absolute neutrality for the time being. Should the Soviets pursue aims with reference to Iran bound to affect Iranian neutrality, it would be advisable for Germany to make representatives in Moscow that these be abandoned".<sup>29</sup>

However, the German Ambassador in Moscow was informed of the Iranian request. He consented to cooperate on the ground that "such cooperation would naturally stop whenever support of the Iranians would affect adversely German-Russian relations".<sup>30</sup>

In October, there appeared the conclusion of a new commercial treaty that would be seen soon between the two countries. But the latest formulation of fresh demands by the new Russian Ambassador, Matveir Y. Filimonov, in Tihhrān, concerning the release of all communist prisoners and the use of Russian oil in the northern provinces of Iran, once more hampered the conclusion of a treaty.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, rumours were current that the Soviet Government had also demanded recognition of Russia's "special rights" in Āzerbāyījān and Gīlān, oil concessions and even air base.<sup>32</sup> The Iranian Government did not deny these.

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29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Engert to the SOS, Oct.3, 1939. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, p.621.

32. Ibid.

Tensions between the two countries continued soaring. The Iranian Government kept a wary eye on Russia. The Soviet's attack on Finland on November 29, caused great uneasiness among the Iranian officials. They realised that the Soviet Union would turn to Iran next. For instance, the Iranian Minister of Finance, Khusrauvi, whose wife was Russian, expressed his deep fear of Russia by saying:

".... the news from Finland was again causing the Government to take an extremely grave view of the immediate outlook....although Iran had furnished no pretext whatever for a change in her relations with Moscow, all Iranian overtures towards a commercial agreement had recently been coldly rejected.... with an eye on Kirkuk and the Iranian oil fields Moscow would doubtless like to accuse Iran of resisting legitimate Soviet demands because encouraged by the British to do so presumably in order to become a base for the invasion of Russia".<sup>33</sup>

To the Iranian Government almost every moment seemed to develop new embarrassments. Between 16th and 21st December the Soviet Union's media had ignored all new developments of the war but Stalin's birthday. Messages of congratulations were pouring into the country. Riżā Shāh apparently missed the occasion, and his message was not sent until New Year's Eve.

The beginning of 1940 signalled improvements in solving the deadlock with respect to the negotiations of

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33. Conversation with Engert, December 1, 1939, US F.R. vol.III, 1940, p.625.

the treaty. The failure of Russia to consolidate the authority of her puppet government in Finland, and its eventual collapse, had softened Russia's attitude towards the negotiations with Iran, although it had not eradicated Russian pressure on Iran whatsoever. For instance, when the representatives of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Lawrence Anderson, arrived in Tihhrān in late December 1939 to seek an oil concession, he discovered that the Iranian Government were prepared to negotiate the grant of oil concession in any area but the North. He was eventually informed by the Prime Minister, on January 11, that the Government had decided not to grant any oil rights to any company "in view of the uncertainties of the international situation while the war lasts." Later on, the Prime Minister informed the American Chargé d'affaires that for "political reasons" he had been obliged to give a negative reply to the Standard Oil application.<sup>34</sup> But in fact the Soviet Union had warned the Iranian Government that they would not permit granting of oil rights to an American company "anywhere in Iran".<sup>35</sup>

However, it was not until March 12 that the new commercial treaty was initialed in Moscow and signed on March 25, in Tihhrān. The Iranian Government claimed diplomatic victory over the signature of the treaty which

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34. Engert to SOS, Jan. 17, 1940. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, pp. 660-61.

35. Engert to SOS, May 5, 1940. Ibid, p.661.



took place in Tihhrān instead of Moscow. The instantaneous outcome of that was obvious slackening of tensions between the two countries.

The mere fact that the conclusion of a new treaty took almost two years can be found in Russia's wanting an agreement of much wider scope than a simple commercial treaty. Moscow had several times hinted that it desired a so-called non-aggression pact or even a military alliance. Her lack of success in the Finnish War had stiffened the Iranian attitude towards Moscow, who adopted a firmer tone and avoided being drawn into political discussions. It was believed that Britain and Turkey lent their moral support, and advised the Iranian Government to concede to Russian demands within her independence and integrity.<sup>36</sup>

The terms of the treaty were not immediately revealed. The British Minister in Tihhrān wrote to London that nothing striking was contained in the treaty.<sup>37</sup> But clauses 5(d), and 9 (8) of the treaty,<sup>38</sup> which gave the Russian trade representatives diplomatic immunity, and the right to establish petrol stations respectively, were a source of anxiety for the members of the Iranian Government. It was suspected that the Soviet Union would eventually abuse these rights, and exploit them for propaganda aims.

Moreover, the Iranian Government did not mention any secret clause, but it appeared certain promises were given

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36. Engert to SOS, April 17, Ibid. p.629

37. Bullard to Lord Halifax (FO), March 27, 1940.  
E 1545/621/34, FO 371/24582.

38. For the full text of Trade and Navigation Agreement, see, Degras (ed.), Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1933-1941, vol.III, pp. 424-35.

during the negotiations. The American Chargé d'affaires confirmed that the Soviet Government had been granted "the right to use if and when required seven Iranian landing fields and one at Khwash near the Afghanistan frontier",<sup>39</sup> and numbers of 'muhājirs', expelled from Russia, had been employed by the Iranian Air Force as interpreters.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, in relation to the Russian demand for the abolishing of the quotas system, the Iranian Government, in April 1940, created, as a face saving policy, a new Economic Section in the Ministry of Finance, whose function was to take over the direction of the government monopolies and to make purchases and to sell without inviting bids.

## II

The Irano-Russian detente was short-lived. The Soviet Government began to bring pressure to bear on Iran. Their unfriendly attitudes were the main topic of the Iranian officials in their meetings with the British, American, and German Ministers. The German Minister, on one occasion enquired about instructions to mediate between those countries. He received a negative reply from Germany.<sup>41</sup> The British and American Ministers believed that both the Russian and German Legations in Tihhrān, were closely

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39. Engert to SOS, May 10, 1940. US F.R., vol.III, p.631.

40. Engert to SOS, May 6, 1940. Ibid, p. 630.

41. Ettel to the Foreign Ministry (Berlin), July 9, 1940. German Foreign Policy, No.141, vol.X. See,f.n., for the Berlin reply, pp. 169-70.

collaborating, of course with different motives, to un-nerve the Iranian Government, and "to represent Great Britain as wishing to use Iran as a cat's paw for an attack on Baku, after which she would leave Iran to her fate".<sup>42</sup>

In July 1940, it appeared that Russia had formulated new demands. The demands included: (1) the cession or occupation by Soviet troops of northern Āzerbāyījān and Tabrīz, part of Gīlān and of Gorgan to the Gurgān River, and Bandar Shāh on the Caspian Sea, (2) control of the trans-Iranian Railway to the Persian Gulf, and (3) use of all Iranian aerodromes.<sup>43</sup> In pursuit of his policy, Riżā Shāh, desiring Iran not to become a protectorate either in form or in fact, and stubborn when aroused, gave instructions to his Foreign Minister to refuse the Russian demands. He had a strong commitment to hold the northern provinces at all costs.<sup>44</sup>

In November 1940, once again Russia's intention with respect to Iran, was revealed in the American Chargé d'affaires' report that the Soviet Union had promised to give carte blanche to German and Italian projects in the Balkans in return for Turkish Armenian, if it was considered vital, northern Iran.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Bullard to Halifax, confidential, March 27, 1940 E 1545/621/34, FO 371/24582.

43. Engert to SOS, July 18, 1940. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, p.634.

44. Engert to SOS, Aug 9, 1940. Ibid. p.635.

45. Engert to SOS, Nov 19, 1940. Ibid. p.637

The Russo-German understanding, which was regarded as the source of many dangerous complications for the world, eventually proved to be nothing but smoke-screen camouflage. As to Iran, the Iranian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Javād 'Amirī,<sup>46</sup> said to the American Chargé d'affaires that "no reliance whatever could be placed on Hitler's or Stalin's promises or guarantees".<sup>47</sup>

### III

The commercial treaty did not in fact, produce practical results. The Soviet Government, exploiting the constrained position of Iran, were demanding too high prices for the goods required by Iran. Besides this, the Soviet Government were deliberately trying to hamper the conclusion of transactions, and then, to give the impression of a certain malevolence on the Iranian side. Indeed, what the Soviet Government desired to achieve was a political gain rather than an economic one. The reasons for this Russian unfriendly attitude towards Iran on the part of Russia has to be sought in her foreign policy; the Tsarist-Bolshevist concept of expansionism.

Practically speaking, the Soviet Union could only utilise one of its important ports on the open sea; Murmansk. The

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46. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 522.

47. Engert to SOS, Nov. 29, 1940. US F.R., vol.III 1940, p.637.



The other major ports, among them Vladivostok, were (are) situated on an inland sea or in seas which, from the point of view of political power, were virtually under the control of foreign States. The ancient aspiration of Tsarist Russia, Istanbul and the Straits, could no longer be considered as vital, Possession of the Straits would not fulfil the Russian aim, since she knew that even the Mediterranean had become an inland sea dominated by those who possessed its approaches. It was no longer worth while for the Soviet Union to strive to possess the Straits, because the only satisfactory outcome of that would be to make Russia a riparian country of the Mediterranean but otherwise would not give her access to the open warm waters.

The shortest route from Russia to the warm ocean was through Iran. Moreover, this, the shortest route, had for transport the great advantage of a railway line which was in excellent condition. The trans-Iranian railway stretched from Bandar Shāh, a port situated on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, via Tih<sup>r</sup>ān, to the Karūn Valley through the centre of the region where the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) had concessions to Bandar Shāhpūr on the Persian Gulf.

A new branch linking Tabrīz to Tih<sup>r</sup>ān should have been completed in 1941 - it was not completed until 1957-8. Tabrīz was already linked with Tiflis by a railway line built by Russia via the frontier crossing-point of Julfā

and was connected with the Russian railway network. Another important Russian railway line running from Baku into the Aras Valley, except for a stretch of 12 Km., to Julfā, had been ready for operation in early 1940.

In pursuit of her policy, Russia, in 1940, was observing the position of Britain vis-a-vis Germany. Any weakening of Britain on the European scene would automatically harm the British position in Iran, consequently the position of AIOC which was vital to the British Empire. The Soviet Government were fully aware of this fact, probably waiting for the appropriate moment to take advantage in Iran of a British defeat. An article in 'Izvestia' of May 16, 1940, may illuminate the Soviet intention. The article said:

"Any rational argument as to the legality or illegality of measures against small states in an area when the imperialist Great Powers are waging a life and death struggle can only be regarded as naive".

This concept of the Russian foreign policy was as much applicable in 1940 as it is today, i.e., in Afghanistan.

The Shāh and his government were clearly aware of the dangers which threatened Iran from the Soviet Union. They also knew that in the event of a British defeat the position of the country in relation to the northern neighbour would become very much more difficult owing to the end of British counter pressure. So it was not astonishing that the American

Chargé d'affaires wrote:

" The ultimate safety of Iran oddly enough is now considered closely linked with the British cause".<sup>48</sup>

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48. Engert to SOS, August 9, 1940. Ibid. p.635.

#### IV. Relations with Great Britain.

In the modern political history of Iran, Britain is, perhaps, the only country whose diplomacy would fairly be described as ambivalent. Her policy during the period 1900-1914 which covers the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, of encouraging and supporting the democratic elements which in spite of Russian opposition and persecution succeeded in setting up the Iranian Constitution enjoyed unbounded prestige. The immense popularity enjoyed by Great Britain as a result of adapting her policy to the exigencies of Iranian Public Opinion was eclipsed by the short-lived Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 which divided Iran into spheres of influence.

During the war period, 1914-1918, British policy in Iran was mainly to combat German influence and intrigues. At the end of the war, though weakened, British power was still comparatively formidable after the Versailles Treaty in 1919. In the same year, Britain found herself almost the only foreign power in Iran, as Germany had been defeated, and the Soviet Union was in the turmoil of civil war.

The conclusion of the treaty of August 19, 1919, which was never ratified by the Majlis, was another severe blow to British prestige in Iran. Since then, Britain experienced sharp reverses, and it would not be an exaggeration to say



that during the whole of Riżā Shāh's reign British prestige was at its lowest ebb.

At the outbreak of the Second World War the British Government decided to seize German exports to southern ports of Iran. This decision caused serious concern to the Iranian Government, and was regarded as a severe blow to the Shāh's industrialisation plans, since Germany was the only country on which the Shāh had almost entirely depended for the materials necessary for those plans. Moreover, Britain was unable to supply Iran with more than a small proportion of her needs. Therefore, the Iranian Government was both perplexed and indignant at the workings of policy under which in effect Iran was no longer able to trade with her best customer, and was not offered alternative export or import markets of any consequence.

Nevertheless, in 1939, political relations between the two Governments seemed to be cordial, though there were disputes arising from the differences between the Iranian Government and the AIOC, for which the Shāh held the British Government responsible.

The Iranian Government's shortage of money found expression in an inspired controlled press campaign against the AIOC. Accusations were made that the company was deliberately restricting the production, thereby cheating the Government. The British Government was regarded as the chief

controller over the operation of the company, whose aim was to curtail production in order to store reserves for the future.

The Iranian Government's dependence on the oil revenues was such that this income played a most important part in the economic growth of the country, particularly in the budget, and according to some arguments, in the extra-budgetary services which came under the Shāh's personal direction. In 1939 the financial situation of Iran deteriorated, the Rial fell on the 'bāzār siyāh - Black Bourse, from 140 to 175 in the pound sterling, despite all artificial measures taken to restrict its fall. The budget, for the first time since 1928-29, showed a deficit amounting to 683,385,287 Rls. Therefore, any decline in oil revenues, which was watched with meticulous interest by the Shāh and his government, would cause adverse effects on the national economy.

Notwithstanding, the company refuted all the accusations and Lord Cadman visit Tih<sup>r</sup>ān in June 1939, and had an audience with the Shāh. He was later followed by one of the company's directors, Jam<sup>e</sup>son, who flew to Tih<sup>r</sup>ān and made a full explanation in person, on February 15, 1940, to the Shāh with respect to the company's policy. These visits temporarily repaired good relations between the Iranian Government and the company but the company's results were under close and

continuous scrutiny.

In consequence of the drop which took place in 1919, strong representations were made by the Government. The decline in comparison with 1938<sup>49</sup> was some 800,000 metric tons, of which about 400,000 tons occurred during the second half of 1939 and could be attributed to the effects of war conditions.

The company owned 90 percent of tankers to carry its seaborne trade and the remaining 10 percent was provided by chartered tankers. At the outbreak of war the company had to place its vessels at the disposal of the British Government for the Allied requirements. Therefore, it suffered from the alienation of the greater part of its fleet from the services. The result was a substantial reduction in off-take from Abadan, thus a decline in the royalty paid to the Iranian Government. Riżā Shāh was determined to accept no excuse for the reduction of the royalty owing to the effect of war conditions on Iranian output. "... England must want Iranian oil", said the Shāh, "the whole world must want Iranian oil".<sup>50</sup>

In early 1940 the Shāh appointed a new Minister to London, the position which had not been filled for two years after the departure of Suhailī. The new Minister, Muḥammad Muqaddam<sup>51</sup>, a pleasant but not a strong personality,

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49. Production for 1938 amounted to 9,254,794 tons. Source; AIOC, FO 371/24572, 1940.

50. Jameson to Fraser (to) the Foreign Office (FO), Feb. 23, 1940. FO 371/24572.

51. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 533.

was the Master of Ceremonies at the Court. His appointment signalled the Shāh's desire for closer relations with Britain. He brought the Shāh's messages concerning the problem of oil royalty and supply of arms. In fact, the Shāh's desire for British assistance had been implied in the forms of arms purchase. But he did not openly ask the British Government for a joint plan, which his minister of war had suggested to the British Military Attache in Tihrān.

The British Government, though sympathetic to the Shāh's problems, was considering "what action should be taken to avoid the adoption" by its representative at Tihrān "of too discouraging an attitude to the Shāh, without, however, entering into any embarrassing commitments".<sup>52</sup>

However, the War Cabinet prepared to send a declaration to Bullard to be read in person to the Shāh. With regard to the question of royalty, the declaration sounded vague if not unsatisfactory. Whereas in the primary draft of the declaration, in which it had been decided to pay the Iranian Government the sum of £3,500,000 as the compensation from the beginning of calendar year 1939 until the calendar year in which an armistice with Germany was to be signed. This clause was, of course, dropped in the declaration to the Shāh.

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52. From the FO to the Secretary of the Sub-Committee, War Cabinet, March 7, 1940, FO 371/24570.



In the case of a possible Russian attack on Iran, the declaration had committed Britain to help Iran not in defence of the northern provinces but only of the AIOC's oil fields.<sup>53</sup> In the event of Russian air attack and reprisal actions by Iran, the declaration had promised "to employ a bomber force in conjunction with French and Iranian Air Forces to attack the sources of Russian oil supply in the Caucasus".<sup>54</sup> Apparently the permission for the Allied bomber units to use the aerodrome at Tihhrān had to be gained from the Iranian Government.

In spite of that declaration, the War Cabinet had approved the report by Chiefs of Staff who reported:

- "(1) that as a land advance by Soviet forces through Iran to Iraq and the Iranian oil fields is improbable, the Soviet attack would be likely to take the form, (apart from subversive propaganda) of air action;
- (2) that if we were at war with the Soviet Union we should at once send to Basra a force to protect Basra and the Anglo-Iranian oil company's oil fields and refinery; but
- (3) that unless a Soviet air attack actually developed (or there were internal disturbances threatening the oil fields or refinery) we should not need to compromise Iranian neutrality by moving the force into Iranian territory;
- (4) that from the purely defensive point of view, therefore, we do not need to co-ordinate plans with the Iranian Government;...." 55

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53. Draft Amendment, secret, D.C.O.S.(40)36, March 1940. FO 371/24570.

54. Ibid.

55. War Cabinet paper, Feb.27,1940. FO 371/24570.

The British Government, according to the Chiefs of Staff, saw no reason to supply Iran with 60 bombers and 20 fighter aircraft, which the Shāh had wished to acquire.<sup>56</sup>

It was obvious that the declaration, in which the British Government endeavoured not to turn down too flatly the Shāh's requests nor to engage in any explicit commitments, could not satisfy the Shāh. He, in such a defenceless situation, desired some sort of guarantees over the oil revenues and arms delivery. His survival was partly dependent on those. The economic situation was worsening, and there were reports of bread shortages and unrest in parts of the country, particularly in Tabriz.<sup>57</sup> The Shāh could not carry out his industrialisation programme and defence preparations alongside such 'unreliable' British, who failed to comply with his demands, in spite of Bullard's strong recommendations sent to London for the most favourable economic treatment for the Shāh.<sup>58</sup> Hence, the Shāh began to look for other sources. He approached the United States to procure armaments, and to adopt the American system for the military, particularly for the Air Force which was equipped mainly by the British. At the same time, he began to bring more pressure to bear on the AIOC, thus, on the British Government. His decision to dismiss all the British craftsmen and technical advisers employed in the Iranian airplane factory, and, to engage Americans instead, was interpreted

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56. Ibid.

57. Bullard to the FO, May 17, 1940. E.2032, FO 371/24571, 1940.

58. Ibid.



by the American Chargé d'affaires as another instance of Soviet pressure.<sup>59</sup> But it was most likely caused by his displeasure with the British Government, because, he then turned to the AIOC to gain a better deal. His argument, his minister in London asserted, was, "why should he suffer because the concession was held by a company whose government found itself obliged to interfere with the company's operations? It was only the fortuitous circumstance that the Company was a British company which involved him in these difficulties".<sup>60</sup>

The Shāh's fresh attitude towards the AIOC began to cause anxiety among officials of the Foreign Office, that the Shāh might resort to take measures against the company. The Foreign Office reported to the Cabinet:

"....Any move against the concession would clearly have a disastrous effect at this time, quite apart from what might happen to the oil supplies. The fact that a ruler like the Shah felt able to offend us at such a moment would be a blow to our prestige in the Middle East. Nor would the fact that we might feel obliged, and find ourselves able, to take the oil by force improve matters much. Apart from the handle for propaganda which this would give our enemies, our Iranian interests would suffer in the future and the clock would be put back in many other Middle Eastern countries."<sup>61</sup>

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59. Engert to SOS, April 27, 1940. US F.R., vol. III, 1940, p. 641.

60. Horace Seymour (FO) to Bullard (Tihārān), March 6, 1940. E 909/25/34, FO 371/24570.

61. The FO to War Cabinet, March 1940, FO 371/24570.

The Foreign Office anxiety mounted when the Iranian Government made another strong representation to the company in late June 1940.

According to the company's predictions, a decline in the production of oil recurred from the outset of 1940, owing to the diversion of tankers from the Persian Gulf run to the American run, and the company's placing its tankers at the British Government disposal. This was, of course, contrary to the stipulations of Article 21 of the concession,<sup>62</sup> according to which the company was bound to abstain from any action which might be prejudiced to the interests of the Iranian Government.

The Shāh's irritation at the lack of good will shown by the British Government, which had also been reflected in the cancellation of the Credit Agreement<sup>63</sup> in June, was expressed this time by pressing the company to raise the royalty. On June 27, 1940, the manager of the company was orally instructed by the Ministry of Finance that oil royalties for the quarter should be paid in gold which was to be capable of being remitted to the United States. The manager, on June 30, informed the Ministry that royalties had been paid in the usual form, and explained the impossibility of compliance with the Ministry demand.<sup>64</sup>

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62. For the text of the 1933 concession, see; League of Nations Official Journal, 14th year, No.12, 77th Session, December 1933, pp.1653-1660.

63. The Agreement was signed between the Iranian and British Governments on February 6, 1940, to enable Iran to make purchases in Britain up to £5 million. This credit had been secured on future oil payments. Full details can be found in E 540/31/34 and E 2155/51/34, FO 371/24572, 1940.

64. Bullard to FO, July 1, 1940, No.206. E.2221/64/34, FO 371/24572, 1940.



On the same line, the Minister of Finance, Khusrauvī, told the Tih̄rān manager of the AIOC that if the company failed, somehow, to satisfy the Government within a week, the cancellation of concession would be proposed to the Majlis on Sunday 7th, July.<sup>65</sup>

On June 25, the Shāh dismissed the Prime Minister, Dr. Matīn Daftari, who had acquired the reputation of being definitely pro-German. For this reason he had not reported to the Shāh certain German propaganda and fifth-column activities of which he had been fully aware, and at which he connived. When the Shāh realized this, and the fact that his own position might be jeopardized by these activities he dismissed him, and publicly censured him in a speech to journalists and deputies of the Majlis on June 29. He and his two brothers and his father-in-law, Dr. Muḥammad Muṣaddiq were arrested and detained. He was released after two weeks, while the others remained under detention.

Matīn Daftari's successor was Rajab 'Alī Mansūr.<sup>66</sup> It was, however, believed that this move had been to bring in a 'neutral cabinet' in order to appease Britain.

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65. Bullard to FO, No. 210, Ibid.

66. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 534.

The oil company welcomed the dismissal of Matīn Daftari who was regarded as "pro-German and consistently opposed" to the company's interests. In a telegram sent by the Company to Britannic House, the Company's headquarters in London, the British Government had been strongly urged to ease dollar exchange difficulties. The telegram also added:

".... Although previous Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs were consistently blocking Khosrovi in his efforts to support the company and British interests, I would emphasize his former attitude and efforts in extremely difficult local circumstances to avoid obstruction to our interests. The new Prime Minister will probably support him if he can produce immediate gesture to take advantage of effort which is obviously being made by the Shah to thwart fifth column activities and to assert Iranian independence of Germans. I would emphasize new Prime Minister is sole remaining representative of that group which was habitually accustomed to former British predominating influence and whose records suggest that if encouraged he would be prepared to appreciate its value today".<sup>67</sup>

However. the genuine demand of the Shāh and his government could simply be found in the letter from the Ministry of Finance to the company, which was royalties at pre-war or higher rates together with full liberty to transfer funds to the United States at privileged rates.<sup>68</sup>

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67. Rice to BP, to Baggalay (FO), June 29, 1940, confidential. E 2192/830/34, FO 371/24582.

68. Letter No. M. 2985. Received FO July 17, 1940 E 2221/64/34, FO 371/24573, 1940.

But the British Government were bewildered as to whether the Shāh merely wished to blackmail the company into offering better terms or proposed to replace the AIOC by another company or by direct management. So, instructions were sent to Bullard to be conveyed to the Iranian Government, threatening that there were limits to the patience of the British Government, and if the unfriendly attitude remained unchanged the British Government would exercise complete control over all exports of oil from Iran.<sup>69</sup> It is not evident whether the threat alarmed the Iranian Government, but the Prime Minister, 'Alī Mansūr, assured Bullard that the Government had no intention of cancelling the concession.<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, negotiations between the two sides carried on. Finally, the Chancellor of Exchequer approved the suggestion that the Iranian Government should be able to transfer into gold sterling received from all sources, subject to a total limit of £3 million.<sup>71</sup> The Iranian Government, however, did not accept the offer as it was looking for a substantial deal in royalties.

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69. From the FO to Bullard (Tihhrān), July 4, 1940. E 2221/64/34, FO 371/24573.

70. Bullard to the FO, No.215, July 5, 1940. E 2221/64/34, FO 371/24573.

Turkish Ambassador in Tihhrān implied the Iranian view on the same line in his conversation with Bullard, July 27, 1940. E 2288/64/34, FO 371/24573.

71. Baggallay to Bullard, July 6, 1940. E 2221/64/34. FO 371/24573.



On July 7, Khusrauvi rehearsed, in the Majlis, the Government's grievances against the AIOC and its failure to fulfil Articles 10(5), 16(1), and 21 of the concession. He accused the company of the breach of promises that the production ought to have reached 14 million tons instead of diminishing. The only concrete proposal made in the Majlis was that the Government should demand either increased royalty at a fixed rate, regardless of output, or that the company should cede to the Government those fields which they could not exploit to the full.<sup>72</sup>

The question of the cancellation of the concession was, however, not proposed to the Majlis, but the fear of it still lingered in the background. Meanwhile, another suggestion was made by the company that the Iranian Government should be offered an interest-free loan of some £4½ million to which the British Government would have been asked to contribute. This offer was, of course, not communicated to the Iranian Government on the ground that the Shāh would, then, undoubtedly insist on the sterling being converted into dollars. An official of the Foreign Office wrote:

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72. For full text see, Muzākīrāt-i Majlis, Daura-yi Davāzdahum, 16 Tīr, 1319. Short extracts in, Bullard to the FO, July 8, 1940. E 2221/64/34, FO 371/24573.

When the account of the Majlis discussion reached London, Sir William Fraser, the company's director, asked the News Department to get a 'stop' put on the dissemination of any news about the Iranian deputies' discussions on the company's affairs. See also, FO to Bullard, August 2, 1940. E. 2288/64/34, FO 371/24573.



"..... my strong feeling is that we should not recommend the Company to make such an offer. I think that the right course is for His Majesty's Government to make it clear firmly, but of course unprovocatively, that, if the Company's concession were given to another concessionaire we should feel obliged to take steps to prevent the movement of oil from Iran. This possibility must be known to the Shah as well as to possible concessionaires and we should make the most of the argument. I dislike the idea of yielding to blackmail. Coming on top of our Far Eastern trouble, to give way to the Shah would create a feeling throughout the East that we are in so perilous situation that we are ready to submit to any bullying or blackmail, even by a small and poorly armed state such as Iran".<sup>73</sup>

In pursuit of a satisfactory formula, proposals and counter-proposals were exchanged between the Iranian Government and the company. Finally, a new agreement was signed on August 21st. According to this agreement, the company undertook to pay to the Government the sum of £1,500,000 on August 31, 1940, and would have to make up the sums on account of royalty, tonnage, dividend participation, taxation and gold premium to £4 million in total respect of each of the years 1940 and 1941.<sup>74</sup> There appeared no mention of the exchange question nor did the agreement contain guarantees to modify the concession after 1941.

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73. Sir H. Seymour to Lord Halifax, July 22, 1940. E. 2288/64/34, FO 371/24573.

74. Exchange of letters between the Iranian Government and the AIOC, August 21, 1940. E 2532/64/34, FO 371/24574.

But, at the last moment when the agreement was to be initialled "Mr. Rice received a message from the Court which amounted to a threat by the Shah that he would modify concession whenever he wished."<sup>75</sup>

The Foreign Office, though satisfied by the way in which the negotiations had gone and the agreement had been reached, did, however, not hesitate to remark; "... it is strength of H.M. Government in the Middle East that will count and situation should be very different by 1942."<sup>76</sup>

Indeed the situation was different in 1942. Iran had been occupied, the Shāh chased into exile, and the British troops present in the country.

The period 1939-1941 was marked by a mounting propaganda campaign carried out in Iran by Germans, British, and Russians on an unprecedented scale.

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75. Bullard to FO, August 24, 1940. E 2489/64/34  
FO 371/24574.

76. FO to Bullard, No. 206. Ibid.

### V. Propaganda in Iran.

Unlike the British and Russian, German propaganda could easily penetrate into Iranian society, whose people, still had a strong aversion to the treaties of Gulistan (1813), of Turkumanchai (1828), and of 1919, and had developed a deep mistrust and hatred for both Great Britain and Soviet Russia. Conscious of this fact, German propaganda sought to capitalize on the discontent of the people, and to turn Iranian nationalism into a 'pro-German' feeling. The Germans' tone of propaganda was mainly to put emphasis on the revival of strong nationalistic aspirations of the people. Consequently their propaganda could permeate those institutions which had basically nationalistic attachments, e.g., the Military. For instance, one of their propaganda promised "a victorious Germany would see that Bahrein was returned to Iran".<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the Germans knew of the fundamental orientation of Iran, being towards the West rather than the Soviet Union. Since Britain could do little for Iran against Soviet aggression, Germany was believed to be the 'only' saviour. This popular view was held by many Iranians including the Foreign Minister who believed: "it was useless to put down Hitler only to let a much worse enemy - Russian Bolsheviks - of society

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77. Engert to SOS, June 1, 1940. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, p. 632.



take his place".<sup>78</sup> Therefore, this Iranian idiosyncrasy had furnished ample ground for pro-German circles to rhapsodize over Hitler, that when the war was won, he would not permit Russia to expand southward.

Soon after its advent to power, the Nazi regime set up a highly organized propaganda machinery. Various institutions were founded such as the Deutsch-Persische Gesellschaft which was concerned with organizing social and cultural activities between Iran and Germany.<sup>79</sup>

Newspapers were also subsidised, among which was 'Nāma-yi Iran Bāstān' in Persian, published in Germany. The paper contained articles praising Hitler, and drawing analogies as much between the Iranians and Germans as Hitler and Rīzā Shāh.

By expanding trade with Iran, the Germans had penetrated into those influential classes of society, who most benefited from such trade, namely the 'bazaris' - merchants-, and a sector of the clergy linked to the 'bāzār'.

From the outbreak of war the Germans intensified their propaganda campaign in Iran. Towards the end of 1939, the German Foreign Ministry re-shuffled their staff at the Tihhrān Legation. This was followed by the appointment of a new minister and counsellor. These strenuous efforts

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78. Engert to SOS, Oct.17, 1939. Ibid, p.623.

79. Lenczowski, op.cit., p.159. See also, L.P.Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, pp. 164-81.



were made to increase their activities in Iran. Dr. Smend was succeeded by Herr Ettel, an active Nazi. He knew Iran well, having served with the Junkers Company in Iran before 1932, when its contract expired. He arrived in Tih̄rān in early 1940 as the new German Minister. But before his arrival another Nazi thruster appeared in Tih̄rān as the Counsellor. He was Herr Hubert Dittman, who had previously served in Jerusalem, and who came straight from the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where he was in charge of personnel. The British Minister reported that he was believed to be a Gestapo man, and there were ample reasons to substantiate this belief.<sup>80</sup>

Herr Ettel's arrival was marked by unprecedented activities on the part of the Legation and the German community in Tih̄rān. The German residents were summoned to the Braun Haus, and instructed not to listen to any but the German radio, not to associate with German Jews, and finally keep themselves unspotted from the public. Security and confidentiality measures were also tightened in the Braun Haus. For instance, all the Iranian servants were turned out, and the Germans waited on themselves.<sup>81</sup>

Besides, German agents arrived in Iran under the guise of tourists and commercial representatives. In early 1940,

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80. Bullard to Halifax (FO), March 27, 1940, Confidential. E 1545/621/34, FO 371/24582.

81. Ibid.

some 300 Germans arrived in Iran via Russia. By June 1940, a total of approximately 2000 German males lived in the country, of whom about 1500 were in Tih̄rān.<sup>82</sup> They were followed by the arrival of two German Storm Troopers; Franz Mayr, and Roman Gamotta in October 1940, who were apparently the employees of the transport company, Nouvelle Iran Express. Another German secret agent, Major Bernard Schulze-Holthus arrived in Tabrīz, as Consular Secretary, in May 1941.

The German colony in Tih̄rān was very active and well organized. They employed as a method of propaganda a whispering campaign and disseminated rumours in the 'bāzār', which "aided by the average Iranian's gullibility and ignorance of world affairs, proved an effective form of propaganda".<sup>83</sup>

The effect of German propaganda was so successful that in June 1941 when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, "a loudspeaker giving the news on Sepah Square brought a crowd of listeners who cheered and applauded the announcement of each Russian town fallen into German hands".<sup>84</sup>

However, the Iranian Government found the German colony too openly propagandist, and Riżā Shāh was increasingly irritated by the hollowness and hypocrisy of German propaganda.<sup>85</sup>

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82. Engert to SOS, June 1, 1940. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, p.633.

83. Bullard to FO, Jan 17, 1940. E 584/584/34, FO 371/24581.

84. H. Arfa, Under Five Shahs, p.272.

85. Engert to SOS, Oct.3, 1939. US F.R., vol.III, 1940, p.622

To offset German propaganda, the British Legation in Tihhrān contemplated carrying out their propaganda campaign on the German model. In late 1939, the British Press Attaché, Miss Lambton, wrote to the Ministry of Information, in London, on these lines:

".... I mentioned to you the difficulty we have in establishing contact with the local population. This is unfortunate, for personal contact is, in view of existing restrictions, one of the most effective methods of propaganda, and one of which the Germans make full use. The situation might well be improved if the Ministry of Information would allow us to expand a certain amount of money as payment, regular or otherwise, to selected individuals, Iranian and Indian, whose function would be to spread propaganda favourable to us among influential Iranians. I have at present someone in mind, who would, I think, be particularly useful in this connection. If this suggestion were adopted, I would propose a sum of £15-20 a month should be paid. I have discussed the matter with Colonel Underwood, who considers it of importance that some money should be put at our disposal to be used in this way". 86

With respect to Russian propaganda, the situation was different from those of Britain and Germany. The communist propaganda were basically subversive, propagated by ethnical and social minorities; Armenians, Muhājirs, and intellectuals.

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86. Lambton to Prof. Rushbrook Williams, No. 444/32/39, Dec.13, 1939. E 587/2/34, FO 371/24570.



Generally speaking, Russia was feared by most of the Iranians. The British Press Attaché duly depicted the attitude of Iranians towards communism, she wrote:

".... Communism, which is what Russia means at the moment in the eyes of the Iranian, is anathema to him whatever class he belongs. There is probably generally speaking little or no comprehension of what communism involves; the mere name is a bogey to the Iranian. The idea of sharing one's possession in common fills him with horror, while the idea that working for the common good is not for one's own personal gain (which is a common interpretation put upon communism) should be a basis for human society seems to him quite unreasonable, if not actually wrong. Even the poor man is not broadly speaking disposed to accept communism".<sup>87</sup>

The Armenian community, the largest and most important religious minority in Iran, was divided into three parties; the "hai Heghapkhakan Dashnaktsoutun", the "Henchakian", and the "Ramkavar", of which the first party was the largest and most influential. The object of this party was to combat communist propaganda among the Armenian community. The party's attitude towards Germany changed from a sympathetic one to one of dislike, when the latter attacked Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. In their view the German action showed that German policy was virtually indistinguishable from Russia and that both were equally oppressive.

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87. Lambton to Prof. Rushbrook Williams, No. 308/4/39, Dec. 21, 1939. FO 371/24570.



The other parties tended to be pro-German and pro-Russian. In fact the "Henchakian" was virtually a Bolshevik tool, and was used for the dissemination of Russian propaganda.<sup>88</sup>

The "Ramkāvar" party was very active in Tabrīz and Isfahān, spreading Russian and German propaganda. Its activities increased particularly after the conclusion of the Soviet-Iranian Trade Agreement in March 1940, whereas those sections of the Armenians who were anti-communist, notably the "Dashnak" party were perturbed.<sup>89</sup> The police began to keep a closer watch on the activities of the party, which had previously been ignored.<sup>90</sup>

Russian propaganda were also propagated by Russian agents in the guise of muhājirs-refugees - and the Iranians who had been repatriated from Russia. There were, in 1939, some six thousand refugees and five thousand Iranians who had entered Iran and were dispersed mainly in the neighbourhood of Tihhrān and major provinces. Many of these were said to be communist agents and to be in possession of funds for propaganda.<sup>91</sup>

Intellectuals or the educated class were among the social minorities who tended to be spreading communist propaganda not because of any love for Russia. They had turned to communism as offering the only means which might

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88. Lambton to Bullard, to FO, Jan.23, 1940, No.(218/2/40). FO 371/24570.

89. Lambton to Bullard, to FO, April 8, 1940. E 587/2/34, FO 371/24570.

90. Lambton to Bullard, to FO, May 18, 1940. FO 371/24570.

91. Ibid.

improve their situation. Opposition to intellectuals came from a large number of people who owned property of some kind or other. This class, although often discontented with the regime, feared that whatever was left by the Shāh, would be seized by a communist inclined government with the support of intellectuals if such a change happened.

Ironically, the sympathy for communism among intellectuals was accompanied by pro-German feeling.<sup>92</sup> This was not possible in the Iranian circumstances. The 'logic' behind this constellation was not difficult to conceive, if one found out the origin of the prevalent opinion about the Shāh. Rīzā Shāh was regarded by many as a British protege. This view is still held by many Iranians with peculiar obstinacy.<sup>93</sup> The problem with this view was that it was not the result of a logical deduction. As it was explained, British prestige had been at its lowest ebb during Rīzā Shāh's reign. But if we believed Lambton's conclusion that " the Iranian, however, is not in the habit of applying logic to the political field",<sup>94</sup> the problem would then be solved.

However, the result of this attitude was to regard anti-British propaganda as a step in the direction of anti-Shāh propaganda. Similarly, there was a tendency

92. Ibid.

93. For example, H. Katouzian, while asserting the popular view that Rīzā Shāh owed his rise to Ironside, states, on the contrary, that "Rīzā Shah was both pro-German and pro-Nazi". But Katouzian fails to substantiate his statement. See, The Political Economy of Modern Iran, 1926-1979. p.134.

94. Lambton to Prof. Rushbrook Williams, Dec. 21, 1940. op.cit.

in the public mind to associate pro-German propaganda, since Germany was opposed to Britain, with anti-Shāh propaganda. Despite this propaganda war, the Shāh was in firm command of Iran's foreign and domestic policies- until the Anglo-Russian entry -, while growing popular discontent, aided by subversive propaganda, was gaining momentum.

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CHAPTER TWO.The Failure of the Policy of Neutrality.1. The Anglo-Russian Occupation of Iran

"....The background of Persia's relations with Great Britain and Russia....., is formed by the nineteenth century Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia and the repeated attempts of Persia to play off one against the other; and a traditional belief that Persia suffers more when these two Powers agree than when they are rivals. Rivalry between them, it is argued may, and often has, caused loss and inconvenience to Persia, but when these two Powers agree over Persia her very integrity and independence may be vitally injured".<sup>1</sup>

## I

Yet, in early 1941, Riżā Shāh had not perceived that the 'brutal force' of reality would make nonsense of his declared 'neutrality'. Theoretically, his policy could do no harm to belligerent powers but in reality it had somehow antagonized them. The geo-political significance of the country had made it impossible for the Government to refuse numerous demands of the concerned Powers without offending them. The Shāh and his government were aware of this, but what else could be done? Moreover, no proposal of an alliance was put forward by any of the belligerent Powers.

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1. A.K.S.Lambton, "Some of the Problems Facing Persia", International Affairs, p.254, vol.22, No.22, April 1946.





The beginning of 1941 did not mark any change in the Government's policy. The German pressure to cancel the AIOC's concession,<sup>2</sup> in April, was cunningly handled by the Prime Minister, Mansūr, expressing to the German Minister the desire of the Iranian Government "to rid itself of the British oil concession at the appropriate moment in order itself to take over these greatest riches of the country".<sup>3</sup> Again, in May, Germany's demands, concerning help for ammunition and fuel for the Baghdad Government, were turned down by the Shāh.

On April 2, 1941, Rashid Ali Gailani carried out a coup d'etat in Baghdad. The Germans had, of course, practised their method of infiltration and intrigue inside Iraq and from Tihhrān to build up a pro-German party there. Already in November 1940, Bullard had reported to the Foreign Office a German attempt based on Tihhrān to bring about a coup d'etat in Iraq in favour of Germany.<sup>4</sup> In early May 1941, the German Minister in Tihhrān received instructions from Berlin to approach the Iranian Government for its consent to Germany's arms deliveries to Iraq through Iran. According to the German plan, additional arms shipment would have been designated with respect to Turkey<sup>5</sup> as earmarked for Iran

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2. N.I.D. 0830, secret, April 16, 1941. E 1682/G. FO 371/27199.
  3. Ettel to the Foreign Ministry (FM), Berlin, secret, April 12, 1941. German Foreign Policy, No. 326, series D, vol. XIII, 1941, p. 532.
  4. Bullard to FO, No. 392, Nov. 29, 1940. E 2942/2/34, FO 371/24570, 1940.
  5. Turkey had permitted shipment of arms for Iran through her territory.

but would have actually been left in Iraq by the route of the Baghdad railway to Iran or sent on from Iran to Iraq by the route to Iran through the Turkish Black Sea ports.<sup>6</sup>

Germany's second demand, in late May, was concerned with supply of fuel for aircraft in Iraq. The Germans demanded the Iranian Government to deliver aircraft fuel to Iraq either from its own stock or to buy it from the Soviet Union on its own account and then ship it to Mosul via Tabriz. The Shāh refused those demands on the ground that they were contrary to principles of his policy. Subsequently, the Prime Minister made a statement to the German Minister on this line that Britain might soon find out about the Iranian cooperation with the Iraq Government, and would regard it as a hostile act and take military measures. The result of a British invasion of Iran would be the immediate entry of Russian troops. Therefore, this would mean the end of Iran. Moreover, Turkey's attitude, he remarked, was of decisive importance for Iran's foreign policy. As long as Turkey did not openly support the Axis powers, Iran had to maintain a strictly neutral stance with respect to the belligerent powers.<sup>7</sup>

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6. The Director of the Political Department to Ettel, Top secret, May 6, 1941. German Foreign Policy, No. 466, vol. XII, 1941. p. 727.

7. Ettel to the FM, Berlin, May 25, 1941. No. 552, Ibid, p. 877.

The fact must, however, not be overlooked that some members of the Iranian cabinet, among whom the Prime Minister were on the side of the Iraqi Government. Both Bullard and Ettel confirmed this,<sup>8</sup> and Bullard reported that the Iranian Prime Minister believed the German control of Iraq might be a safeguard against Soviet aggression towards Iran.<sup>9</sup>

In May, the Finance Minister, Khusrauvī, was dismissed. The Germans desired the return of Matīn Daftarī and formation of a pro-German cabinet. But the Shāh was determined to maintain a neutral cabinet.

## II

The failure of Germany to encourage Turkey to adhere to the Triple Alliance, or to secure the transit of German troops across Turkish territory and postponed Germany's traditional 'Drang nach Osten', towards the oil fields of Mosul. Therefore, in March, 1941, according to the Yugoslav Prime Minister, General Simovitch, Germany had concentrated large troops on the Turkish border to attack that country. Hitler's plan was to reach the Straits in 'blitzkrieg' fashion and, taking advantage of the Soviet Union's neutrality,

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8. Ettel to the FM, Top secret, May 8, 1941. German Foreign Policy, No. 472, vol. XII, 1941, p. 737.

9. Bullard to FO, May 17, 1941. E 2198, FO 371/27151, 1941.



to occupy Iran and Iraq.<sup>10</sup> To implement this plan German propagandists and fifth columnists were preparing all the necessary grounds for a German invasion. They succeeded in Iraq when the coup was carried out in April, In Iran, their attempts eventually failed but they had set up a fifth column organization at the Legation in Tih̄rān with branches located in German business concerns throughout the country. According to the American Minister's report, some five hundred tough and well-armed men could be placed on the streets of Tih̄rān within a few hours.<sup>11</sup> Upon this report the activities of these Germans increased among White Russians, Armenians, and disaffected elements in the north of Iran when Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

### III

Great Britain's attempts to establish a closer relationship, in 1940, with Russia against Germany had failed. Even as late as June 1941, any avowed rapprochement between London and Moscow was yet invisible. Soviet foreign policy, which Churchill described as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma", was to avoid any impression of cordiality between Moscow and London. The Foreign Office, disappointed with such a Soviet attitude, summoned, on June 7, 1941, their Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Stafford Cripps, to

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10. BBC broadcast of August 10, 1941. Cited in Dallin, Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942. pp.277-8 ft(2).

11. Dreyfus to SOS, June 28, 1941. US F.R., vol.III,1941, p. 383.



London, The Times of June 13, 1941, in its editorial wrote;

"Cripps had been sent to Moscow in the hope that his appointment would bring about a closer understanding between Great Britain and Soviet Russia. This hope, though no fault of the Ambassador himself, has not been fulfilled. Sir Stafford Cripps has been received in Moscow courteously but without enthusiasm. At no time has he been admitted to the confidence of the Soviet Commisar of Foreign Affairs.

Therefore, it appeared that any Russo-British rapprochement could be perceptible only if and when the 'objective' moment arrived.

At four o'clock in the morning of June 22, 1941 Germany attacked Russia. The month before, Churchill, however, had openly warned Soviet Russia of a German strike at the "granary of the Ukraine and the oil fields of the Caucaus".<sup>12</sup> The German attack brought about the 'objective' moment, Sir Stafford Cripps returned to Russia, this time as an ally.

The immediate force which cemented the Anglo-Russian alignment was the mutual desire to defeat Germany. To achieve this, Russia had to be supplied with war materials. Only three routes were open for such supply. The arctic route by Archangel, which might be hampered by the winter ice; the Far Eastern route via Vladivostok, which was watched by the Japanese and operated over only seven thousand miles of

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12. Quoted in Dallin, op.cit. pp. 326-7

railway; and, finally, the route across Iran, which led over a five hundred miles stretch from the Persian Gulf to that great inland sea, the Caspian, upon which the Soviet Union maintained a strong naval force and which again gave access to the very heart of Russia, the Volga Basin.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Iran was practically the only route for supplies to Russia from the British Empire and the United States.

Iran's neutrality was not the real problem to prevent the British or Russians from asking her to allow transport of troops and war materials through the country. Even if the Iranian Government had consented to such a request, Iran, as we will discuss, would have been occupied anyway as indeed she was. Therefore, a pseudo-legitimate excuse had to be found as a pretext to occupy the country. The expulsion of Germans from Iran as such, on which the Russians insisted, could not satisfy the British, whose policy was concerned with the security of the Iranian oil fields. If the Soviet Union had lost control of the Caucasus the threat to the oil would have become immediate, and this was, indeed, the case whether the Germans in Iran had been expelled or not.

Germany's attack on Russia required the British and Soviet Governments to examine possible developments in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, and to consider the impact of the 'new' situation on their policy with respect to Iran.

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13. For more information about the Iranian route, see G.Kirk, "Strategic Communications in the Middle East".



The British Government's long term policy with relation to Iran, as outlined, was;

- " (1) the maintenance of fully independent Iran,
- (2) the promotion of Iranian prosperity,
- (3) the maintenance of Iran's freedom from undue influence of any power".<sup>14</sup>

In spite of this outline, the 'new' situation required short-term modifications in the policy. The first modification was when the British Chiefs of Staff decided to move troops into Iran if the Russians failed to contain Germans approaching the Caucasus. In fact the Chiefs of Staff had reached this decision long before. The occupation of Iran was part of a comprehensive plan concerning the security of the Middle East, which had been designed by Chiefs of Staff in July 1940:

- " The retention of our position in the Middle East remains of the utmost importance to the successful prosecution of the war, particularly in view of our policy of an economic blockade of Europe. It is also important to secure the Anglo-Iranian oil fields".<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, the German Minister, Ettel, reported to Berlin that the news of imminent British occupation of Iran had reached Riżā Shāh on July 1, 1941 through the Egyptian Ambassador, Zulfaqar Pasha, whom had been instructed by King Faruq.<sup>16</sup> Ettel's report was, however, denied later on

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14. The FO to Bullard, (Foreign Office meeting of July 11), July 14, 1941 E 3780/933/34, FO 371/27196.  
 15. Lord Caldecote to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, U.K. High Commissioner in Australia, Most secret, July 3, 1940. Document on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49, vol, IV, p8.  
 16. Ettel to FM(Berlin), top secret, July 3, 1941. German Foreign Policy, No.66, vol. XIII, 1941, pp.77-8.

by Egyptian authorities as a false report.<sup>17</sup>

Whether or not the report was really a false one it is still difficult to ascertain. But it seems that Rīzā Shāh had received from "a" source certain information about such possible occupation, because extensive defence measures were immediately taken. The reinforcement of troops in the provinces of Āzerbāyījān, Kirmānshāh, and Khūzistān was accompanied by diplomatic steps taken both in Tihrān and London. Bullard was told that Iran, according to her policy, would turn against 'the aggressor' of any side, and that, in the event of any British attack, the Iranian Government would appeal to Germany for aid and enter the war on Germany's side". Bullard, impressed by the Shāh's plain language, categorically denied such news, and declared that Britain had no intention of attacking Iran.<sup>18</sup>

Soon after the rapprochement, the British Government abandoned its plan, and decided to join hands with Russia to occupy Iran. This was, of course, a clever manoeuvre, since it could serve, among others, an important object, which was to confine the Russian presence in Iran by an agreement. Meanwhile, the British Government also took diplomatic steps, through its Ambassador, Viscount Halifax, in Washington to prevent the US Government from delivering aircraft to Iran. The Ambassador claimed that his government

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18. Ettel to FM (Berlin), July 3, 1941, No.66. op.cit.

17. See Egytian Gazette, 7 September 1947. Cited in Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946. The Middle East in the War. p.141(ft.1)



had information " which led it to believe that aircraft sent to Iran might be utilized, in view of changing developments in the Near East, against the British forces there...".<sup>19</sup> The American authorities were not convinced by his argument. The facts emerged later, from the Minister-Counsellor of the British Embassy in Washington, Neville Butler, when he revealed to the State Department that:

".... when the Ambassador spoke to you recently about the desire of the British Government that further aircraft exports to Iran be held up, the latter (Ambassador) had in mind the general unsatisfactory Iranian attitude towards Great Britain rather than any particular development".<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the State Department and the British authorities agreed on the shipment of only spare parts of obsolete planes "in order to maintain the goodwill of Iran in view of the possibility of a deterioration of Anglo-Iranian relations in the near future".<sup>21</sup>

Although the problem of German nationals was used as a pretext preparatory to aggressive measures against Iran, it had to be taken into account, at any rate. The growing concern about the numbers and activities of Germans in Iran was first expressed in 1940 by Bullard. He, in May 1940, instructed the British Consuls to report the number and organisations of Germans in their areas.<sup>22</sup> Then, in June 1941,

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- 19. Memo of conversation by the Under Secretary of State (Welles), July 8, 1941. US F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.360.
  - 20. Memo by the Chief of Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles), July 16, 1941, pp.362. See also the same file, Document No.248125, July 29, 1941, pp.364-5 US F.R., vol.III, 1941.
  - 21. Document of July 30, 1941. Ibid, p.365.
  - 22. Bullard to all Consuls in Iran, May 21, 1940. E 2043, FO 371/27571, 1940

The Foreign Office discussed a plan to curb the Germans' activities. According to this plan there should be an increase in the number of British subjects employed by the Foreign Office on political work in Iran;" in fact have recourse to 'infiltration', more or less on the German model".<sup>23</sup> "Plan is an excellent one", The Government of India commented, "(?but) F.O. have produced it five years too late. It is not possible now to acquire British subjects with intimate knowledge of Persia and Persians, and without it they will be of little value".<sup>24</sup> Therefore, The Foreign Office asked the Government of India " to consider the desirability of sending specially selected pilgrims to Meshed", in order to gather information about the Germans. A certain Sayyid Muḥammad Rāzī left India on August 14, 1941. The Government of India then sent a telegram to Bullard as follows;

" He will travel as an ordinary pilgrim via Zahidan,(?Meshed) and Tehran to Iraq. He will return to India by same route after spending two or three months in Iraq and Iran (Persia). He has been instructed to keep in touch with you and follow your instruction".<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, the managers of the Imperial Bank were instructed to pass information about the general situation and activities of Germans to British consuls or the Legation.<sup>26</sup>

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- 23. FO to Tihṙān, No.262, June 8, 1941. E 3004/G, Ext 3361 IOR: L/P&S/12/3517.
  - 24. Govt. of India, Dept. of External Affairs, to SOS for India, June 14, 1941. EXT 3446, IOR: L/P&S/12/3517.
  - 25. Govt. of India, Dept. of External Affrs., to SOS for India. (Addressed to H.M.Minister at Tihṙān No.260 and H.M. Ambassador repeated to Secy of State for India and British Consulate at Meshed, August 17, 1941, EXT 4999,
  - 26. Bullard to Foreign Simla, Repeated to FO, Secret, June 28, 1941, No.266. IOR: L/P&S/12/3517.



Suggestions, in connection with the problem of German nationals, were made that the British Government should take certain measures to put economic pressure on Iran, whose result might be the expulsion of Germans. Similar suggestions had been made in 1940 by the Ministry of Economic warfare.<sup>27</sup> In July 1941, Bullard proposed certain economic steps to be taken against Iran.<sup>28</sup> But the general view, with which the Foreign Office agreed was that the economic pressure on Iran would not for some months produce sufficient inconvenience to cause the Iranian Government to get rid of Germans from Iran.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it appeared the alternative would be a military action.<sup>30</sup>

#### IV

In July 1941, there was every indication that Iran would be occupied by British or Russian forces. The Iranian Minister in Washington reported to Tihhrān the article, sent from London, in the Washington News; that Britain would send troops to Russia through Iran. The Minister added:

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- 27. British Economic Policy towards Iraq and Iran, Nov. 11, 1940. E 2916, FO 371/24576, 1940.
  - 28. Bullard to FO, July 21, 1941. E 4006, FO 371/27150, 1941.
  - 29. Minute by Sir H. Seymour (Eastern Dept), secret, July 26, 1941. E 4141/3444/34, FO 371/27201.
  - 30. Ibid.

".... in my conversation with the officials (US) here, they confirm the possibility of such British action".<sup>31</sup>

A similar indication reached Tihṛān from the Iranian Ambassador, Sa'īd in Moscow. He wrote ".... my understanding is this that they (British and Russians) want to revive the spirit of the 1907 Agreement at least for the duration of war".<sup>32</sup> There also appeared an article, "Iran Weak Link on Way to India", in the News Chronicle of July 5, in which their correspondent in Istanbul, Mr. Patmore, wrote;

"The weak link in the countries barring the Nazi way to India is believed to be Iran. It is felt here that Britain and Russia must bring pressure to bear on the Iranian Government to check the definite pro-Axis tendencies of Iran's rulers. The Shah of Iran is known to be a cynical, ruthless and money-loving dictator, but Britain and Russia are in a strategic position to threaten Iran, and only firm measures will impress Iran's ruler, who started his career as a soldier-adventurer".

## V

It was in late July that the British Chiefs of Staff presented the plan for their actions in Iran. The C-in-C of India was assured that the requisite forces for such actions would be available soon.<sup>33</sup> The initial draft of this plan seemed to consist of two phases;

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32. Sa'īd to Tihṛān, No.1190, Murdād 16,1320 (August 7,1941), Ibid. For the text see Appendix II, p.543  
 33. Chiefs of Staff (War Office) Plan, ciphered to C in C India, July 28, 1941. E 4179, FO 371/27200.



Phase (1) the British and Russians would assemble forces and then tell the Shāh to expel Germans from Iran. The Shāh would not like this, but would either give in under protest or would temporise, in which case the British should then proceed to;

Phase (2), the occupation of the oil fields and the bombing of Tih<sup>r</sup>ān. At the same time the Russians would come in from the North.

It was obvious that this plan would have created a general state of chaos and confusion, which was, of course, not in the British interest. There was no mention of the occupation of Tih<sup>r</sup>ān in the plan, and it seemed, however, that no concurrence of any kind on this matter was officially concluded between Russia and Britain prior to their entry into Iran. But they had definitely reached a 'de facto' agreement on the basis of the 1907 convention, since an official from the Foreign Office in his comment on the Chiefs of Staff plan wrote;

".... there is an unoccupied area between the zones occupied by the Russians and ourselves and if enemy agents are free to intrigue, perhaps with the encouragement of such Persian authorities as remain and of Persian public opinion, the consequence for us might be very serious".<sup>34</sup>

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34. Minute by P.H. Curshworth (FO) on Chiefs of Staff plan. Ibid.

Soon after the Anglo-Russian entry into Iran, the Viceroy of India wrote to Eden, reciting the German menace, and hoped the British would decide with Russia to control the whole of Iran until the end of the war. Furthermore, he commented on area of occupation by saying;

" Perhaps the general line of Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 would be a useful precedent. But there is important question of joint occupation of Tehran, and should have to extend the British line under the Convention further to the north and to the west so as to include the oil fields in it and also curtail or eliminate the neutral zone... We ought to do our utmost to keep Perso-Afghan frontier in our own sphere".<sup>35</sup>

## VI

The first joint Anglo-Russian démarche was made in Tihhrān in the last days of July 1941. The Iranian Government had been asked to deport four-fifths of the Germans in Iran at once. The representation was formal and not backed by military or economic threat. In its formal reply, the Iranian Government declared that Iran had been a sovereign, independent, and neutral country, which for her development programmes had to obtain foreign citizens' assistance. Soon after this 'non-committal' reply, the official Iranian news agency issued a statement, on July 31, in answer to foreign

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35. Vicery (India) to Eden, personal, Aug.28,1941, IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

press and radio reports about the danger to Iran from the Germans. The statement refuted such reports as baseless and exaggerated, and added that the Government had a list of foreigners and all were under the surveillance of the police. None would be permitted to commit illegal acts, and the Government was the guardian of the legal rights of the inhabitants, the statement said. This statement was much more conciliatory than the former strong and bellicose statements that Iran would defend her neutrality at all costs.

Besides the formal reply, the Iranian Prime Minister promised Bullard the expulsion of thirteen Germans at once and eleven in the following week including those employed in the radio station.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, discussions between London and Moscow continued over their subsequent steps which had to be taken in Iran, and whether or not to put their real aims to the Iranian Government?

At the Foreign Office, conflicting views were propounded. One official wrote;

"....It seems to me, therefore, that we should now consider afresh what our real aims in Persia are and how far the use of force will advance them. I take it that far the most important of our aim is the security of the oilfields, and after that, but a good way after it, comes our desire to open up the trans-Iranian route to Russia....

Would it not be best, when we are in a position to talk sternly to the Persian Government, to come out into the open and

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36. Dreyfus to SOS, July 29, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.385.



say frankly that we ourselves look after the oilfields for the duration of the war, and (if we and the Russians feel equals to the task) take special steps to ensure that the railway functions in accordance with our requirements...Even if we do this, we could of course keep up pressure about the Germans in Persia, but I cannot help thinking that it would be a mistake to make the presence of these people the main issue between us and the Persian Government. I submit that even if the Shah turned every one of them out of the country, it would not really get us much further..."<sup>37</sup>

The Russian Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, a cultured and talented man, suggested that their demands on the Iranian Government should be firstly, the eviction of the Germans as it had been proposed in the first démarche, and secondly, the right of free transit for Russian troops and war materials across the trans-Iranian railway. Eden, not impressed by this suggestion, pointed out that the request for the use of the railway had not been mentioned in their previous note to the Iranian Government, and yet it was contrary to their respect for her neutrality. Maisky argued that they had to cite the example of Sweden, who had been neutral but she had given Germany the right to cross troops.<sup>38</sup>

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37. Minute by P.H. Curshworth, op.cit.

38. Eden to Cripps (Meeting with Maisky), No.495, July 29, 1941. E 4306/3691, FO 371/27196



Eden's argument was, of course, rather an excuse than the expression of truth. The fact was this that Maisky's suggestion had disadvantages on the political side. First of all, the British objectives could not be realised by that about which Sir Horace Seymour wrote;

"....I think, that our own object, as distant from that of the Russians, will not be accomplished simply by the removal of Germans from Iran if we obtained it".<sup>39</sup>

Secondly, any demand upon Iran for passage of troops and war materials would influence the situation in Turkey against the Allied benefit,<sup>40</sup> because the German Government would then, no doubt increase its pressure upon Turkey, particularly with respect to transit. Hence, Maisky's suggestion was abandoned, and the preparatory measure taken for the second representation in Tihhrān.

The second note was more or less similar to the former one but with more implications and backed by an oral declaration. The note emphasised that the British and Soviet Governments had accepted Iranian neutrality and had no design against Iran's independence. No time limit had been inserted for the expulsion of the Germans, since the British and Russians, obviously, did not desire to give it the character of an ultimatum.

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39. Minute by Sir H.Seymour, secret, July 26, 1941, op.cit.

40. Sir H.Knatchbull Hugessen(Angora) to FO.secret, Aug 2, 1941. E 4375/G, FO 371/27200.

The British Government informed Turkey of their measures, which would be taken in Iran with Russian collaboration. The Turks obviously did not like it, because of their suspicion of the Soviet Union's aspirations in Iran, and they also did not want to have the Russians on or near their undefended southern borders. The British were aware of Turkey's uneasiness, so they had to give her assurances over this matter. Finally the British Government agreed with the Soviets to give the Turkish Government, 'mutatis mutandis', assurances that they had no aggressive design against Turkey, particularly the Straits, and both Governments would confirm their fidelity to the Montreux Convention.<sup>41</sup> Declarations were made, on this basis, to the Turkish Government on August 11, 1941.

The second representation had to be made on August 16. Meanwhile, British and Russian troops took positions nearer the southern and northern borders of Iran. The Iranian Military Intelligence appeared well aware to these movements. The Pahlavī Infantry Regiment together with twelve medium and twelve light tanks were sent to the South.<sup>42</sup> In the North the Army was reinforced and the Shāh departed for inspection of troops on the northern frontiers.

Anglo-Russian troop movements were interpreted as part of the war of nerves accompanied by increasing force

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41. The American Ambassador in Great Britain, Winant, to SOS, Aug. 8, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 388-90. Montreux Convention signed July 20, 1936, regarding the regime of the Straits. See League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLXXIII, p. 213.

42. Military Attaché to the War Office, Most secret, Aug. 13, 1941. E 4716, FO 371/37200

in form of daily broadcasts from New Delhi, Baku, Ankara, and other stations. Ankara radio praised the Shāh for the defence of the country. But other radios broadcast false news, particularly the BBC and Baku radio. For instance, the BBC broadcast report items such as; a train-load of Germans had arrived in Iran, rebellion in the Iranian Army, tribal uprising, and distorted news on the activities of Germans in Iran. The American Minister in Tihhrān confirmed that those reports were distorted, and added, "... the American representative of the Associated Press informs me that most of the news sent by press men in Ankara comes directly from the British Legation. The Iranian side of the story has never been told".<sup>43</sup>

The second Anglo-Russian notes were delivered to the Iranian Government on the afternoon of August 16. They were supplemented by verbal demands, which implied a threat of military action, making the notes a virtual ultimatum. But Bullard emphasised that they were not intended as such.<sup>44</sup> A reply to the notes was expected within three days. It was not difficult to speculate on the Iranian reply that demands would be refused.

On the eve of the delivery of notes, the American

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43. Dreyfus to SOS, No.89, Aug.12, and No.99, Aug.21, 1941. US F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.395, pp 401-3.

44. Dreyfus to SOS, No.92, Aug.15, 1941. Ibid., p.397-8.



Minister, who was instructed by the State Department to disassociate himself from the joint Anglo-Russian representation, had gained the impression from Bullard that unless the demands were complied with the Anglo-Russian troops would occupy Iran. He wrote;

"I consider it not unlikely that if invasion comes the Shah will lose his throne..."<sup>45</sup>

In London, Eden and Maisky, did not even wait for the Iranian Government's reply. " We must work on the basis that the answer we receive from the Persians on the 20th would be negative", said Eden, " we should therefore consider our next step in detail now".<sup>46</sup>

Maisky thought that two alternatives were open on the receipt of a negative reply. They could tell the Iranian Government to modify its attitude within forty-eight hours otherwise they would resort to other measures, or they could take military action without an ultimatum. After a lengthy discussion both Eden and Maisky agreed to discard the idea of giving an ultimatum, because an ultimatum of 24 or 48 hours " would give the Persians time to appeal to Turkey and to the world for help, and to make the most of their case with their own people".<sup>47</sup>

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45. Ibid.

46. Eden to Cripps (Meeting with Maisky), Aug.18, 1941.  
E 4791/3691/G, FO 371/27231.

47. Ibid.

Therefore, it was preferred to act without previous warnings or time limits.<sup>48</sup>

One remaining problem was that of the security of British subjects at the time of occupation. This problem was discussed at the War Cabinet, and the decision was made that if they were maltreated, "Persians resident in Iraq and Egypt would be taken as hostages for the reprisal".<sup>49</sup>

In Tihhrān, the Government was parrying to gain time, without realizing the gravity of the situation. Still, they were in search of a 'magic formula' to satisfy both the Germans and the British. The Government's initiative to obtain an official utterance from the Turkish Government in favour of Iran was not answered. Turkey refrained from speaking out. Meanwhile the German Minister, conscious of the Russo-British demands, suggested to the Prime Minister that a number of German specialists employed in Iran should return to Germany because they were needed there. The Prime Minister did not accept the suggestion, and added that the Government was not interested in giving the impression that the Anglo-Russian pressure had been successful.<sup>50</sup>

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48. Ibid.

49. War Cabinet meeting, secret, Aug.4, 1941. E 4478/3444/34, FO 371/27231.

50. Ettel to the FM (Berlin), Most secret, Aug.19, 1941. German Foreign Policy, No.215, vol.XIII, 1941, p.337.

He had realized that the British and Russians had other aims and that if the Germans were sent away, it would merely encourage them to make further demands and use a new pretext with the Government. Therefore, he and definitely the Shāh desired the departure of Germans to be carried out in consequence of economic difficulties, rather than because of political circumstances.

The Iranian Government's reply to the notes was made on August 19, according to which the Government had undertaken to deport Mayr, Gamotta, and Eilers, and to send away thirty Germans a month. On receipt of the reply, Bullard said to the Iranian Foreign Minister that he believed that it would not be acceptable, since it would take more than a year to effect the departures of a considerable number of Germans.<sup>51</sup> The Government's reply was followed by the Shāh's personal message sent to the British Legation in the late evening of August 23, reassuring the British that the expulsion of Germans would be carried out with accelerated pace.

This conciliatory attitude was at variance with the Government's replies, the tenor of the Shāh's speech<sup>52</sup> at Aqddassiya, the Military Academy's Summer camp, and

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51. Drefus to SOS, Aug.19, 1941. US F.R., vol.III.1941 p.400.

52. Arfa, op.cit., p.297. See for the Shāh's speech.



with the tone of Ittī lā'āt's editorial of August 23; which in referring to the Shāh's speech had called on the people to be ready for sacrifices.

The Shāh's personal message revealed the fact that his Government's defiant attitude had only been a face-saving policy. The British had presumably realised it. Instead of offending the 'amour propre' of the Iranian Government and people they should have approached the Iranians to suggest a closer cooperation, or the forming of an alliance. They did not. The German question was, from the international law point of view, the internal affair of the Iranian Government and the Russo-British demand constituted an infringement of the sovereignty of Iran.

At four o'clock in the morning of August 25, 1941, the British Minister and the Russian Ambassador delivered the Iranian Prime Minister a note which (1) expressed disappointment that the Iranians had not heeded their demands, (2) expressed regret that they were to take the matters into their own hands to protect their interests, (3) reiterated that they had no designs against Iran's integrity or sovereignty, and (4) expressed the hope that Iran would not resist since they had no desire to cause harm to the country or its citizens.<sup>53</sup>

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53. For the full text see Documents on American Foreign Relations, 4: 674-76. World Peace Foundation, Boston.

According to the Iranian Prime Minister, Mansūr, the Anglo-Russian troops had moved into Iran four hours earlier than the delivery of the note.<sup>54</sup>

Later in the morning, Bullard and Smirnov were summoned to Sa'dābād Palace. They were received in audience by the Shāh. While leaning against his desk, he began the conversation;

"What is this? I have given my assurance that most of the Germans will be expelled from Iran. I find this morning that you have attacked both the north and south of my country and have seized eight Axis ships in the Gulf. It seems that Germans want to take all of Europe and now the Russians and British want to take Iran".<sup>55</sup>

Iran was too weak to defend herself against the two powerful neighbours. The army put up a puerile resistance which soon ceased. Finally, the Shāh's request to President Roosevelt that he should endeavour to stop hostilities received a 'non-committal' reply.<sup>56</sup>

54. 'Alī Mansūr's memoir about the Anglo-Russian Occupation is kept at 'Markaz-i Tahqīqāt, Tihārān, cited in Vālīzāda (ed.), Khātīrahā (Memoires), p.256.

55.a) Dreyfus to SOS, Aug.25, 1941: US F.R., vol.III, 1941.

b) see also Bullard to FO, Aug.26, 1941. E 5005/3326/34 FO 371/27218, 1941.

c) Somewhat detailed description of this event is found in Javād 'Amirī's memoir, cited in Vālīzāda, op.cit.

56. Mansūr in his memoir, writes about Bullard's audacious behaviour at the meeting at the Palace. For the full text of Roosevelt's reply to the Shāh on September 2, 1941, see US F.R., vol.III, pp.446-7.

Reactions to the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran varied. The American State Department expressed relief that the British Government had decided to invade part of Iran and not to give a free hand to 'the Bolsheviks'. The Turks were embittered by the action. The Turkish Ambassador in Washington, Mehmet Münir Ertegün, complained that the US Government was only endeavouring "to rescue the British without regard for the welfare of other countries and to preserve the ruling caste of England, for which", he said he had, "only contempt because of their utter selfishness and readiness at all times to sacrifice others for their own interests."<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the Turkish newspaper 'Cumhuriyet' of August 27, 1941, wrote, "Iran is quite capable of controlling or expelling any element considered guilty of subversive activity".

The main weight of German criticism was directed against British 'hypocrisy' rather than 'Bolshevist imperialism'.<sup>58</sup> The Italian Government strongly condemned the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran. The 'Stampa' of August 26, 1941 accused the US Government of supporting the Anglo-Russian move in Iran, and said that US statements

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57. Memo of conversation by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray), Aug. 25, 1941. US F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 417.

58. The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to SOS, Aug. 26, 1941. Ibid, p. 424.



on Iran were made for domestic consumption press. The article concluded that the move was unmistakable evidence of what the Anglo-Saxon meant by freedom and sovereignty of nations.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, a British view on the occupation may be gauged from this extract from Sir Oliver Harvey's (late Lord Harvey of Tasburgh) diary;

" our first act of "naked aggression". A.E. rather ashamed of himself, so too is PM. But I tell him it is essential for us to get our base and the oilfields secure while the going is good."<sup>60</sup>

The Prime Minister, Mansūr, resigned on August 27, and Muḥammad 'Alī Furūghī was appointed in his stead. Furūghī's appointment was regarded as a conciliatory move towards the British, as Bullard remarked. The prevalent public calm rapidly gave way to nervousness. The fear of Russian occupation of Tihṛān had disposed the public to look to the British as at least preferable. It was, however, a rude awakening when the Iranians found the perennial bogey of Russian invasion had become a brutal reality.

The next Anglo-Russian move was to tackle the 'problem' of the Shāh and the future regime of Iran.

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59. The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to SOS, Aug.26, 1941. Ibid, p.425.

60. John Harvey (ed.), The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, p.36, London 1978. Also cited in David Carlton, Anthony Eden, p.186. London, 1981.

### CHAPTER THREE.

#### The Aftermath of the Occupation.

##### 1. The débâcle of Riżā Shāh and his exile

"Machiavelli showed that the subject's will is, negatively, the rock on which the Prince's power, unless he steers wisely, will be shipwrecked. He did not also show that, positively, it is the rock on which that power can be built."

(R.G. Collingwood, The New Leviathan. 1942.p.180)

## I

The occupation of Iran by Anglo-Russian troops caused some surprise but little resentment. The general belief was that Riżā Shāh had been responsible for the mis-management of the affair and that he should have agreed to Anglo-Russian demands, thus avoiding an open break, which could only end in the humiliation of the country. As a result his prestige rapidly fell and criticism became increasingly outspoken. Ironically, the public still believed that the British were behind him, and it was not until the second week of September when the BBC Persian broadcast started the campaign against him that the people became convinced that the British Government were not supporting the Shāh. When he

finally abdicated, the British achieved considerable popularity, as having forced him to do so.

The Foreign Office in collaboration with the Government of India had designed a six-stage propaganda campaign to be broadcast from the BBC, of which the last stage was direct attack against the Shāh.<sup>1</sup>

It would, however, be naive if it was thought that the British or British propaganda were the only factors which forced him to abdicate. Though it was believed that the BBC broadcast was instrumental in bringing about the abdication, the determinant factors were, however, the grasp of the unrelenting situation by the Shāh himself, the surge of his unpopularity, and the pressure put on him by the Iranian Government.

## II

The idea of the restoration of the Qajar dynasty, contemplated by the India Office in June 1940,<sup>2</sup> appeared, in August 1941, to have been under meticulous consideration again. The Government of India held the view that if the Shāh's downfall was brought about by the British and the Soviet Government in collaboration, the enemy propaganda would no doubt set out on a fresh course of glorifying

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1. The Government of India to SOS for India, Simla Aug. 29, 1941. Ext 5301, IOR; L/P&S/12/552.
  2. Amery to Halifax, June 17, 1940. E 2141/G, FO 371/24582.



the departed ruler in the hope of appealing to Muslim sentiments particularly in India.<sup>3</sup> Hence, it seemed that the Government of India would confine itself only to the six-stage propaganda campaign if needed.

The staunch advocate of Riżā Shāh's removal was Bullard. He was aware that the British had been long held responsible for the Shāh's misdeeds. Moreover, he found out that this universal belief had been strengthened by the fact that the Shāh, after being severely shaken by the crisis, was still firmly in power. He complained,

"....the Shah is once more interferring in every department, beating Ministers and behaving generally like the greedy ignorant savage...."<sup>4</sup>

Then he continued;

"It was believed that we could not come to this country with troops and dictate an agreement and yet leave the people under their greedy tyrant".<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, he recognised that if the British did not give encouragement to the idea of a constitutional government, and profit from the popularity achieved by the occupation, because the rule of the Shāh seemed shaken, and partly because the British troops had behaved so much better than the Russians, the tide would turn

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3. Govt. of India to SoS for India, Ext. Affrs. Dept., Aug. 29, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

4. Bullard to FO, Most secret, No. 650, Sept. 3, 1941. E 5372/3326/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

5. Ibid.

against the British as the Shāh was behaving as before. He suggested some such statement as the following to be broadcast from London and Delhi;

"Recently Tehran radio for the first time for a very long while referred to the Constitutional Government of Persia. This reference to the constitution seems to have aroused the greatest interest throughout Persia where it is proposed that great changes of administrative control of public finances etc. may be contemplated."<sup>6</sup>

Bullard believed such statements would be sufficient to encourage the cabinet and the people, and to make the Shāh hesitate. He finally suggested:

"we really must show sympathy with popular opinion in Persia or the weight of hostility to us will clog our efforts. This is not (grp.undec.) opinion of one man, it is the opinion of our all(sic.) Persian allied and neutral friends and my staff without exception- Counsellor, Diplomatic (grp.undec.? adviser) and commercial secretaries, Military Attachés and press attachés. Indeed my staff and I have now got to the point when we believe the Shah is in fact incorrigible..."<sup>7</sup>

In the early part of September, the Government of India appeared to have been taking a stronger stance vis-a-vis the Shāh. They expressed a view on the Shāh similar to that of Bullard. The Government of India believed that as long as the Shāh remained the fountain

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6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

of authority in Iran and was in the position to treat his ministers in an unpleasant manner and so long as the belief remained that the British were his ultimate support, it would be improbable that an Iranian cabinet however well disposed to the British and anxious to serve the best interest of the country would construe and implement the armistice terms in the way that the British Government desired. The Government of India felt that the Iranian administration had to come into existence with a friendly population behind it. "We can only secure this", wrote the Government of India, "by eliminating the Shah or by rendering him impotent. Once this is assured, there should, we feel, be little difficulty in securing our full desiderata. If we fail to grasp the nettle we shall be faced by a breakdown of administration and a hostile population".<sup>8</sup>

Despite these dispatches from Tihhrān and India, the Foreign Office, though admitting their argument, was still reluctant to take any serious steps against the Shāh. Therefore, Bullard was informed by the Foreign Office in the following terms;

"....hitherto it has seemed to us best not to take steps against the Shah, unless we can satisfy ourselves that his disappearance would not lead to worse confusion".<sup>9</sup>

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- 8. Govt. of India to SOS for India, No.4766, Simla, Sept.4, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/552.
  - 9. FO to Bullard (Tihhrān), No.637, Sept.6, 1941. E 5327/3326/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/552.



Certainly, Bullard could not advise the Foreign Office of better prospects after the Shāh had been removed. So, he thought it would be wise if he left it to the Iranians. He knew that more British involvement would create more adverse results. Once, he wrote;

"I have only contempt for those Persians who expect the British to change their Government - and would then accuse them of intervention."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, he received instructions that he should avoid giving the impression that the British Government were supporting the Shāh.<sup>11</sup>

From the second week of September, opposition to the Shāh began to grow stronger and more open. The former antagonized traditional classes became outspoken. There was a general feeling amongst the younger men that the country had lost face through the Shāh which could only be regained if he went. The Prime Minister, Furūghī,<sup>12</sup> an honest man of converted Jewish descent, believed that the Shāh ought to go. He told Bullard that the Shāh would leave of his own free will if his policy was seriously criticised in the BBC broadcast, and that any cabinet in office could carry on if there was an interregnum.<sup>13</sup>

10. Bullard to FO, No.650, op.cit.

11. FO to Tihhrān, No.637, op.cit.

12. See Personalities, Appendix I, p.527.

13. Bullard to FO, secret, No.704, Sept.10, 1941.  
E 555/3326/34, IOR L/P&S/12/3520.

Similarly, the Foreign Minister, 'Alī Suhailī<sup>14</sup>; a very reasonable, matter-of-fact, and an approachable person, told Bullard that the Shāh could be persuaded to abdicate. Then he ventured to ask the British Government's attitude before they took any action. Bullard, who had waited a long time for such a moment to come, expressed his opinion by saying;

"....that if they considered that the Shah ought to go, H.M. Government would not interfere to prevent it."<sup>15</sup>

Then Bullard reported to the Foreign Office: "I did my best to make him (Suhailī) believe that it is for Persians to initiate a policy...."<sup>16</sup> to get rid of the Shāh.

The Government's persuasion, and particularly the news of the Russian troops approaching Tihārān, (on Sept. 17) hastened the Shāh's decision to abdicate. On September 16, he abandoned the throne on favour of the Crown Prince, and left for Isfāhān.

After his departure from Tihārān, the Government considered that he should leave the country, but they thought that the Shāh's property should be secured before he left. Hence, Ibrāhīm Qavām<sup>17</sup> was sent to Isfāhān to obtain the deed of covenant. According to Qavām, the new

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14. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 521.

15. Bullard to FO, No. 742, Sept. 15, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/553

16. Ibid.

17. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 531.

Shāh wished all his brothers without exception to leave with the Shāh.<sup>18</sup>

Furūghī had, like Bullard, thought of India for the Shāh's first destination, and of South Africa as the best place for his permanent exile.<sup>19</sup> The Shāh, on the contrary, had wished to be allowed to go to America, possibly to Canada.

On September 15, 1941, on the eve of the abdication, Bullard took steps to secure a place for the Shāh. He wrote;

"If the Shah abdicates where is he to go? He ought not to remain in Persia. It would seem that he can only go to India in the first place though I am aware that the Government of India do not want him."<sup>20</sup>

The Foreign Office had considered that in case of abdication and his departure from Tihrān the Shāh must go to some area under Allied occupation otherwise he might create trouble. Therefore, the military authorities had been instructed to use force to detain him if he showed any resistance.<sup>21</sup>

The Government of India was informed of the Shāh's proposed destination, and asked for approval.<sup>22</sup> The Viceroy

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- 18. Bullard to FO, Sept. 21, 1941. E 5854/3326/34, FO 371/27219
  - 19. Bullard to FO, Sept. 21, 1941. E 5862/3326/34. FO 371/27219
  - 20. Bullard to FO, Sept. 15, 1941. No. 743, EXT 5706.  
IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 21. FO to Bullard, Sept. 15, 1941, No. 718. E 5666/3326/34,  
IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 22. Draft telegram from SOS for India to Viceroy,  
Sept. 15, 1941. EXT 5706, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.



strongly rejected it. He feared that the presence of the Shāh in India would cause discomfort among the Moslem population, and Jinnah would certainly capitalize on his presence to show the Shāh as the victim of the British policy. Furthermore, the Viceroy warned that the Shāh should not be sent to any country in the Empire with a substantial Mohammadan population.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the Viceroy's reluctance, the Foreign Office still hoped that the Government of India would admit the Shāh. "The Government of India can hardly refuse admittance to the ex-Shah...", Pink commented.<sup>24</sup>

Certainly there existed conflicting views between the Foreign Office and the Government of India over the Shāh's immediate destination. The Government of India had decided not to allow him to land at Bombay.<sup>25</sup>

On September 22, the Viceroy, putting an end to the Foreign Office hope, confirmed his position vis-a-vis the Shāh's entry to India. He wrote;

"(? As I) have already made clear I fully appreciate inconvenience but I cannot take risks involved in having Shah in India for however short period. Jinnah is most anxious to work up this Persian business and a good deal of the Mohammedan press is (no doubt under his influence) showing greater signs of sympathy for Shah and his regime. One cannot wisely, in these circumstances face

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- 23. Viceroy to SOS for India, Sept.16, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 24. Minute by Pink on Bullard, telegram No.794, Sept.20, 1941. E 5866, FO 371/2719.
  - 25. Govt. of India, Ext.Affrs.Dept., to SOS for India. Sept.24,1941. EXT. 5928, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

possible dangers involved, I am arranging for Shah to be put on a ship in Gulf and we can keep him at sea until a decision is reached as his final disposal.."26

On September 22, S.S.Bandra was instructed to sail for Bandar Abbas. The message from F.O.C. Royal Navy to C-in-C East Indies S.N.C. Persian Gulf reads as the following;

"On arrival to embark ex-Shah of Persia and party of approximately (?25) which includes (corrupt group) sons and 14 servants. After embarking party GRMX (Bandra) is to be sailed for Bombay direct. S.N.C Persian Gulf inform (?BANDRA). Final destination of Shah not yet known."27

By September 24, the decision had been reached to send the Shāh to Mauritius. This time the Colonial Office showed its concern over the decision. There were in Mauritius some forty to fifty thousand Moslems. The Colonial Office suspected that the Shāh might endeavour to cause trouble among the Moslem community and might also obtain some help from the small but influential pro-Vichy elements among the Franco-Mauritians. Hence, the Governor was instructed to take firm action in the event of such trouble. This instruction was stronger than the former that the Shāh and his party" would have

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26. Viceroy to SOS for India, Sept.22, 1941. EXT 5878. IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

Bullard gives a contradictory version of this; he writes; "He (Riżā Shāh ) wanted to go to India, but his anti-clerical policy had made him so unpopular there that the Government of India could not allow it". See "The Camel Must Go", p.230.

27. E 5866/332/34, FO 371/27219.



to be kept under observation though not necessarily closely guarded."<sup>28</sup>

In the morning of October 2, S.S. Bandra arrived at Bombay. The steamer was kept six miles out at sea. The passengers and crew were not allowed to disembark. Clarmont Skrine, who knew Persian, had been appointed to accompany the Shāh. He met the Shāh on board and broke the news of the destination. The Shāh was furious. He requested that this message should be sent to his son in Tihrañ;

"We have arrived at Bombay. Representative of Government of India(? and) some soldiers have come on board to tell us no one(? is) permitted to disembark and that according to British Government's decision I shall have to (? go) and live in Mauritius. In other words we are being treated as prisoners although I left Persia of my own free will and British Government expressed to me their approval of my going to America. Please ask reason for this sudden decision. We are in(?good) health."<sup>29</sup>

The message was of course not sent to Tihrañ, because at that stage the British Government did not want to inform the world of the Mauritius decision.<sup>30</sup> Riżā Shāh sent a similar message to the Viceroy, asking him whether

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28. A.B. Acheson (Colonial Office) to Mr. Pink (FO), Oct. 1, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

29. Govt. of India, Ext. Affrs. Dept., to SOS for India, Oct. 3, 1941. EXT. 6229, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

30. Ibid.



the decision had been taken after he left Iran, and why he was not permitted to go to America.<sup>31</sup> The decision to send him to Mauritius had been taken while he was in Kirmān, and refusal to disclose the ultimate destination was certainly deliberate.

In his reply to the Shāh, the Viceroy stated;

"....I must make it clear that the British Government have never agreed that your Majesty should go to America with your family and it would therefore appear that there has been some misunderstanding on this point. The decision now divulged that you should proceed temporarily to Mauritius is based on requirements of the war situation and according to my information was taken before your Majesty embarked at Bandar Abbas. I must assure your Majesty that there is no intention of (? treating you as a prisoner in Mauritius..."<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile the Argentine Government instructed its consul in Cape Town to issue a visa for the Shāh and his entourage. Accordingly the Iranian Legation in Washington was informed of the Argentine decision. The Legation, not knowing the Shāh's whereabouts, requested the British Embassy to convey their message to the British Government so as to be passed on to the Shāh.<sup>33</sup> In its secret telegram, the Foreign Office informed the

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- 31. Govt. of India, Ext.Affrs. Dept., to SOS for India (undated, but presumably Oct.3, 1941), EXT 6261, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 32. Govt. of India, Ext.Affrs. Dept., to SOS for India, Oct.6, 1941. EXT 6303, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 33. Viscount Halifax (Washington) to FO, No.4572, Oct, 5, 1941. E6380/5952/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

the Washington Embassy of the decision that the Shāh would not be permitted to go to South America.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Shāh had not been allowed to go to Argentina was that some members of the Imperial family, particularly the second son, 'Ali Riżā, might become instruments of German propaganda.<sup>35</sup>

Prince 'Ali Riżā, while at Bombay, sent letters to the new Shāh, Queen, and ex-Queen, accusing the British of breach of faith. His letters were intercepted by the British authorities there and they found certain extravagant phrases such as " the English have played their traditional trick of St.Helena and Napoleon", "Indian and English soldiers took us into custody", "failing Divine intervention my father will probably become the slave of these people", " if my brother will do nothing for us the life of every one of us is in danger".<sup>36</sup>

The letters were detained and never reached Tihṛān.

It was typical of Iranians, Bullard thought, that, by the middle of October 1941, Riżā Shāh had begun to achieve popularity. The people regarded him as the alleged victim of British cruelty. The myth had been created that the British got rid of him because he defended the independence of Iran, and wanted to modernize

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- 34. FO to Washington, secret, No.5498, Oct.10,1941.E 6380 /5952/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 35. Bullard to FO, No.1037, Oct.24,1941. EXT.6820, E 6943/5952/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.
  - 36. Govt.of India to SOS for India, Oct.13,1941.EXT.6511, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.



the country, whereas the British wished to enslave it and make it "return to camels". Bullard argued this new development by saying;

".... it has arisen partly because it flatters (grp.undec:??s the) Persians to compare the ex-Shah with Napoleon and makes him seem less ignoble to believe that the ruler who, (sic.whose) slave they were for so long, was a great man".<sup>37</sup>

At seven o'clock in the morning of October 16, 1941, the Shāh and his party arrived at Port Louis in Mauritius. The villa 'Valory', prepared for them was a large three-storeyed building belonging to the head of the local P.W.D., M.Regnard, and stood in a fine garden with plenty of trees and a stream running through it. It was about 1200 ft. above the sea in a region which was regarded as the best in the island from the climatic point of view. The three youngest Princes and Mr. Izadī, the Shāh's secretary, were installed in the garden annex and the others in the main house. The only discontented member of the party was Princess Shams, who insisted on a separate villa for herself and her husband, Firaidūn Jam. Skrine complained:

" She is about the most selfish and spoilt young woman I have ever met but being a great favourite with the ex-Shah, her nuisance value is considerable".<sup>38</sup>

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37. Bullard to FO, No.1037, op.cit.

38. Letter from Skrine to Caroe, Oct.22, 1941, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.



Riżā Shāh never liked Mauritius. To him life there seemed a gradual death. When Sir Bede Clifford, the Governor, at tea with him asked whether he was comfortable and receiving every attention, Riżā Shāh replied, "what shall I say? We are prisoners". On Sir Clifford's remonstrating, the old man continued, " you say we are free, but Mauritius is a prison, albeit a big one. We are accustomed to great open spaces and mountains to which to escape in the heat. To us this existence is unreal, a sort of death in life".<sup>39</sup>

Upon his complaint and because of health reasons,<sup>40</sup> the British Government decided to move him to South Africa. Soon after, it was decided that the date of his arrival in South Africa should be delayed, in order to strengthen the British bargaining position vis-a-vis the Iranian Government in dealing with the conclusion of the Tripartite Treaty.<sup>41</sup>

Riżā Shāh and his party arrived in Johannesburg on March 27, 1942. He did not like the climate there either, and above all he found communication more difficult. In July 1943, he requested the British authorities to be moved to any country under British control that was nearer Iran.<sup>42</sup> Bullard was informed of this, and he strongly

39. Skrine to Wightam, Dec.22,1941. EXT 599,IOR: L/P&S /12/3518.

40. His illness was diagnosed' progressive cardiac failure secondary malignant Cachexia.

41. Letter from Young (FO) to Kimber (DO), Jan.9, 1942, E 22/22/34, FO 371/31392.

42. From South Africa to Dominion Office, July 8, 1943. IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

advised the Foreign Office of undesirability of such a move.

In July 1943 general elections were impending in Iran. Rumours were current that the new Shāh was trying to secure a seat for his father at the elections, which was, however, not true, because the electoral law, under which various close relatives of the reigning Shāh were precluded from membership of Majlis, should have been rectified to include his father in this ban. And the young Shāh believed himself in 1943, to be a constitutional monarch.

To transfer Riżā Shāh to a country near Iran, Bullard thought, would however justify rumours, and certainly give the impression that he was on his way back to Iran under British auspices.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Bullard regarded Riżā Shāh's complaints about climate and communication as "ridiculous excuses". "From our point of view here", remarked Bullard, "the more difficult the communications are between the palace and the ex-Shāh the better."<sup>44</sup> Hence, Riżā Shāh's request was refused, and the Dominion Office wrote to South Africa, informing them of the decision, adding;

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43. Bullard to FO, No.782, July 12, 1943. E 4060/245/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/3518.

44. Ibid.

"....if we were to comply every time he expressed a wish for a change of air, there would be little hope of inducing him to settle anywhere."<sup>45</sup>

Riżā Shāh died on July 26, 1944. His reign was an example of moderising autocracies.<sup>46</sup>

The organic crisis, following by the disappearance of Riżā Shāh, could have rapidly driven the jerry-built Iranian society into a chaos that would jeopardize the Russo-British war endeavours. Hence the problem of the future regime had to be tackled in great haste. There was talk of a republic, which the Soviet Union no doubt favoured.<sup>47</sup> But no united party with a clear policy came forward. It was not known whether the British Government approved of an Iranian republic, but it was certain that the British did not wish for a drastic change; a transition from monarch to republic would only add more chaos and confusion. It might be argued that the British preferred, in 1941, to preserve the monarchy, possibly by the restoration of the Qajars.

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45. Dominion Office to S.Africa, July 13, 1943. IOR:L/P&S /12/3520.

46. For a theoretical and analytical work on the failure of modernizing autocracies see, for example, David Apter, *Politics of Modernisation*.

47. (a) H.Hashimī, "Naqsha-yi Jumhūriyat-i Iran va Riyāsat-i Jumhūri-yi-Sā'id", *Khāndanihā*, Nos.1, 3 & 4, *Shahrivar* 9, 16 & 19, 1330 (August 31, Sept.7 & 10, 1951).

(b) Military Attaché to Bullard, to FO, No.930, Oct.6, 1941. E 6392/3444/34, FO 371/27233



## II. Britain's Policy on Restoration of the Qājārs.

It was on June 16, 1940 that Prince Hassan visited, in London, the Secretary for India, Amery, to inform him of his desire to leave Britain for Canada. On the same occasion, the Prince pointed out that he might be able to reassert his claim to the throne if the war extended to Iran.<sup>48</sup>

\*Moḥammad Ḥassan Mirzā, known as Prince Hassan, was born on Shavval 9, 1316 (February 20, 1899). He was the second legitimate son of Moḥammed 'Alī Shāh and full brother of the late Shāh of Qajar dynasty, Sulṭān Aḥmad Shāh, who was dethroned in 1925 and who died in Paris on February 27, 1930. On the last departure of Aḥmad Shāh in November 1924, Moḥammed Ḥassan Mirzā, known as Vali 'ahd (heir apparent) remained in Tihrān as Prince-Regent. During 1924 he dealt with the Republican movement in a dignified and statesmanlike manner. But his struggle with Riżā Khān Sardār Sepah, then Riżā Shāh, culminated in the decision of the Majlis on October 31, 1925, dethroning Aḥmad Shāh and putting an end to the Qajar dynasty. Prince Ḥassan left Tihrān the same night. After remaining for some time in Baghdad he went to Europe with

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48. Amery to Lord Halifax (FO, June 17, 1940 op.cit.)

his mother, Malikeh Jahan. He lived in Paris for a while, later moved to Britain. After the death of his brother in February 1930, he published a declaration in 'Le Matin' of July 20, claiming his rights as successor to the sovereignty of Iran. Three days later 'Les Temps' published an announcement, inspired by the Iranian Government, that the Qajar dynasty had come to an end, and that the pretensions of Mohammed Hassan Mirzā were unfounded."<sup>49</sup>

He had several children; his elder son Hamīd Mīrzā, was born about 1909, educated in England, and became a British subject. He worked for a while in British Columbia, felling timber, then at the headquarters of the Shell Company in London, under the name of Drummond. His younger brother went to sea in the merchant service for three years under the name of David Drummond, and in 1941 was longing to be allowed to serve in the British Navy.<sup>50</sup>

After his meeting with the Prince, Amery wrote to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, saying:

"....if the war extended to Iran, as it may any day, a situation might well arise in which it might be possible for him to reassert his claim to the throne and indeed it might be of great importance to us to have him do so".

Then Amery continued;

"....From that point of view it might be important for us to have him handy

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49. Adapted from E 832/826/34, FO 371/24582, 1940.

50. Letter from Amery to Eden, August 29, 1941. IOR L/P&S/552.

here, whether to broadcast to Iran, or to put him on an aeroplane and send him to Baghdad or Baluchistan".

Finally, upon his character, Amery remarked;

"He is still quite a young man... a charming fellow personally and wholeheartedly on our side". 51

The Foreign Office certainly was not impressed by Amery's idea in 1940. Therefore, it remained in the background until nearly a year later when Bullard sent a hint;

"....The Shah is the object of almost universal execration and we also as his supposed supporter. He could not count upon full support by the army. Movement for the removal of the Shah and even his dynasty would be popular...If the Shah was forced to leave his capital and failed to find Iranian support elsewhere it is conceivable he would retreat to the oil area especially if we had been forced by circumstances to embark upon its defense, or he might seek out protection elsewhere. In that case we should I think avoid any action which might be represented as supporting his cause and contemplating his return. As the Shah keeps order and maintains neutrality his continuance in power during the war probably suits us better than any practicable alternative but he was driven out, even if obviously by German action, we ought to act with the greatest caution and above all to avoid any suggestion that we class him with popular rulers of Norway, etc." 52

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51. Amery to Lord Halifax, June 17, 1941. op.cit.

52. Bullard to FO, May 7, 1941. E 2026, FO 371/27150



The course of events, from July henceforth, changed to become different from what Bullard had pre-conceived in May (1941).

August and September were the months in which the Foreign and India Office cogitated upon the restoration of the Qajar dynasty. Lord Linlithgow, the advocate of this policy, in his private letter to Amery recommended;

"I think it might be well worth keeping our eye on the legitimate successor to the Kajar dynasty..."

Then he went on to express his anger with Riżā Shāh, by saying;

"I see no reason why we should let ourselves be saddled with responsibility for Reza Shah if Reza Shah is unable to hold his own".<sup>53</sup>

Again, in late August, he recommended serious consideration of the restoration of the Qājārs.<sup>54</sup>

The Government of India and Amery argued that the Qājārs were not merely a family but a large tribe, numbering hundreds of thousands, mostly in Northern Iran. They had been badly treated during the reign of Riżā Shāh. Therefore, the restoration of the old regime might succeed in some degree in rallying natives and hereditary leaders of the country.<sup>55</sup>

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53. Extrace from private letter of Lord Linlithgow to Amery (10), Aug. 11, 1941 IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

54. Telegram from Linlithgow to Amery, enclosed in Amery's letter to Eden, Aug. 29, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

55. Govt. of India, Ext. Affrs. Dept., to SOS for India, No. 4623, Simla, Aug. 29, 1941. EXT. 5301, IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

In late August, Amery, while warning Eden to think the possibility of Russian suspicions of any restoration under British auspices, reasserted his view but left the decision to be taken by Eden. He wrote;

"....but I do strongly urge that you should at any rate have<sup>56</sup> the Qajar candidates sized up".<sup>56</sup>

It would be difficult to state whether the Foreign Office had been convinced by the India Office and the Government of India. But it seemed that the matter was under careful consideration by the Foreign Office in early September, though they did not come forward with a clear policy.

In the second week of September, the Viceroy of India seemed to have become less enthusiastic about the idea, while, on September 8, when asked by Amery to give more information about the Qājārs his reply was non-committal. Amery wrote to him;

"If Mirza Ismail<sup>57</sup> is in close touch with Persia I wonder if he has views on your suggestion of Kajar restoration which might now possibly be considered".<sup>58</sup>

In his reply the Viceroy wrote;

"I find it a little hard to judge how close Mirza's contact with Persian right is. But (after discussion with Caroe) I should on the whole reluctant to breach with him this matter of a possible Kajar restoration,

56. Amery to Eden, Aug, 29. 1941. op.cit.

57. See Personalities, Appendix I. p. 534.

58. Telegram from SOS for India to Viceroy, No. 1053, Sept. 8, 1941. IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

It is very touchy stuff, and if it were once to get out that any such idea was in your mind, I think you will probably feel with me that it would be dangerous, I would prefer therefore on the whole to mark time and do nothing for the moment."<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, the rapid developments of events in Tih<sup>r</sup>ān from September 10, to the 16th, were making it difficult to plan for a would-be successor of Riżā Shāh.

On September 10, the newspaper Itt<sup>i</sup> lā'āt published an editorial headed " Sentiments of the people". It said;

"Nobody expected such severe conditions. The Iranian Government had tried to maintain neutrality but in vain. We are in face of great difficulties which we did not expect or deserve but the Government could not act otherwise. We had no dealings with the German and Italian Governments, except ordinary and commercial ones but we wished nothing to prejudice them. This also is in accordance with absolute neutrality. To our regret our Government is now obliged to close the German, Italian, Roumanian and Hungarian Legations in Iran but our missions in the capitals of those countries will remain and our political relations will continue. We expected better things in the way of freindship and neighbourliness.."

The article was regarded as anti-British and misinformed. It was believed that this had been inspired by the Crown

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59. Viceroy to SOS for India, personal, Sept 10, 1941.  
IOR: L/P&S/12/552.



Prince. "I believe that this article was sent by the Crown Prince to the Cabinet", wrote Bullard, and that the Cabinet having refused to allow publication, the Crown Prince sent it direct to the newspaper with orders to publish."<sup>60</sup> This telegram left the Foreign Office in further consternation. It was, however, on September 15, that Eden learned that the Crown Prince had not been involved in the publication of the article.

The growing parallelism between Russian and British policy in Iran became apparent, particularly in the case of Riżā Shāh. Maisky expressed his government's view that the sooner the Shāh went the better. After further discussion the Ambassador agreed that Eden should instruct Bullard to approach the Iranian Government about a suggested successor to the Shāh.<sup>61</sup>

Although both Eden and Maisky agreed on the removal of the Shāh, there is no evidence to suggest that the Soviet Government considered the Qājārs as the successor.

On learning from Bullard, Furūghī strongly rejected the idea of a Qājār ruler. Moreover, there was no general or even considerable demand for the Qājārs. Bullard quickly grasped the situation and wrote to the Foreign Office:

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60. Bullard to FO, secret, No.706, Sept.11,1941. E5557/3326/34, EXT. 5887, IOR: L/P&S/12/552.

61. Eden to Sir S.Cripps (Moscow), (Meeting with Maisky), Sept.14, 1941. E 5613/3326/34, FO 371/27218.

".... We could force the country to accept Hassan (or anyone else) but I should have thought his ignorance of Persia a serious bar and his English education a source of embarrassment sooner or later both with the Persians and Russians!"<sup>62</sup>

Of course, Bullard seemed to be pretty muddled about who Prince Hasan was, when he described him as ignorant of Persia and having an English education. He was evidently mixing him up with his son Hamīd.

Furthermore, Bullard pointed out;

"....Another objection is that there are hundreds of (repeat hundreds of) Qajars in the country and they are all waiting hungrily many of them on my doorstep for (the) return of the days when the country was bled not by one leech but by hundreds".<sup>63</sup>

On September 16, Riżā Shāh abdicated and left Tihhrān the same day. The situation of the country was so critical that the Iranian Government was compelled to announce his abdication in favour of the Crown Prince, before receiving the approval of the British and Soviet Governments.<sup>64</sup> Bullard and the Soviet Ambassador knew of the gravity of the situation. Therefore, they did not object to the proclamation, moreover, they had not received any instructions from their governments. It was a 'fait accompli' but they did not commit their governments.

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62. Bullard to FO, secret, No.767, Sept.17 1941.  
E 5754/3326/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/553.

63. Ibid.

64. Bullard to FO, Sept, 17,1941. E 5724/3326/34,  
FO 371/27218.

Of his talk with Furūghī, Bullard wrote to the Foreign Office;

"....I added that after all(the) Crown Prince could also abdicate if necessary, but I hope it will not come to that just at present."<sup>65</sup>

Finally, after a lengthy discussion with Furūghī over the Crown Prince, Bullard came to the conclusion that the acceptance of the Crown Prince would be least disturbing to the Country and Allied interests. In his despatch to the Foreign Office, he argued that for several reasons the British Government might expect the correct attitude from the Crown Prince, namely, the warning from the fate of his father, a consitutional procedure which would not allow him freedom to intrigue, and youth and inexperience which would place him under the influence of the Cabinet.<sup>66</sup> In the end, Bullard recommended to the Foreign Office;

"....If the two Governments in conjunction give the Crown Prince a trial ( we could always get rid of him quickly if he proved unsuitable) I think that choice of a shah, President of Republic etc. had better be left to a constituent assembly, Let them meet in some out-of-the-way place and wrangle by themselves".<sup>67</sup>

Upon the Bullard recommendation and, apparently, the Soviet Government approval of the Crown Prince as the best

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65. Bullard to FO, No.767, op.cit.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.



candidate at that time, the Foreign Office gave its verdict, which reads;

"We have no illusion about the character of the Crown Prince, and the position is that we are prepared to give him a trial, but subject to good behaviour."<sup>68</sup>

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68. FO to Tih<sup>h</sup>rān, secret, No.729, Sept.17, 1941.  
E 5726/3326/34, IOR: L/P&S/12/553.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### From Occupation to Alliance

#### I. The Anglo-Russian Terms and Zones of Occupation

"....we have rooted out the malignant elements in Tehran; we have chased a dictator into exile, and installed a consitutional sovereign pledged to a whole catalogue of long-delayed sorely needed reforms and reparations; and we hope soon to represent to the House a new and loyal alliance made by Great Britain and Russia with the ancient Persian State and people.....  
The Persian episode, so far as it has gone, would seem to be one of the most successful and well conducted affairs in which the Foreign Office has ever been concerned"<sup>1</sup>

The Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran strengthened the Allied front which ran in an immense crescent from Spitzbergen in the Arctic Ocean to Tobruk in the Western Desert in Autumn 1941. Besides, it served the important British aims in presenting a shield which could bar the eastward advance of Germany, while it also enabled the British to join hands with the Southern flank of the Russian Armies and to bring into action there both military and air forces.

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1. The Prime Minister (Churchill), Supply:Committee.  
30 September 1941, H.C.Deb., Fifth Series, vol.371.  
col.15.

The Russian advance into Iran was accompanied by the bombing of open towns particularly nearby Qazvīn. Rīzā Shāh was reported to be very anxious about the Russians' hostilities and their continuing advance towards Tīhrān. Some officers had advised him to take up arms again and fight to the end but Ibrāhīm Qavām had discouraged the idea and said to him that the Shāh's only hope laid in doing whatever the British might advise.<sup>2</sup>

On August 29, 1941, Bullard and Smirnov had still not received instruction from their Governments as to whether Tīhrān would be occupied. Bullard hoped that the capital would remain free from foreign influence. But in the event of Russian occupation of Tīhrān, he suggested to the Foreign Office that the Iranian Cabinet should stay in Tīhrān to negotiate with the Allies. Meanwhile, Rīzā Shāh was so frightened of the possible occupation of Tīhrān by the Russians that Bullard reported;

" I gathered ominous hints that the Shah had considered either taking refuge in the British Legation or fleeing to some British territory... To a question of what the British and Russians intended with regard to the Shah, I said that I could not comment on what was a matter for His Majesty and his people."<sup>3</sup>

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2. Bullard to FO, No.622, War Cabinet distribution, Aug.29, 1941. E 5176, FO 371/27208.
  3. Ibid.



The advance of Anglo-Russian troops into Iran continued. The Iranian Ambassador in the Soviet Union, Sā'id, on his own initiative prepared a note to Molotov, pointing out the incorrect interpretation of article VI of the Treaty of Friendship of 1921, and protesting against the entry of Soviet troops into the territory of Iran, and asking him to stop hostilities;

"I beg you to be so good as to stop the advance of armed forces on the territory of Iran with a view to an amicable settlement of the question and by respect for the sovereign rights and neutrality of Iran..."<sup>4</sup>

This note was overlooked by the Russians. They did not even transmit Sā'id's telegram which contained the report of this action to his Government, while he had asked for it.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the US State Department was endeavouring to encourage both the British and Russians to make a statement with regard to Iran, reassuring the Iranians as well as other nations of their temporary presence in Iran in order to combat Hitler.<sup>6</sup> Such a statement would have a very healthy impact on all the Moslem nations in particular, and on people's of small countries in general. But the Soviet Union declined to go further than their previous note handed to Sā'id on August 25, which stated;

"....The Soviet Government has no designs on the territorial integrity and state independence of Persia. The military measures taken by the Soviet Government

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4. The Ambassador in the USSR, Steinhardt, to the SOS, Aug.27, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.430.  
 5. Steinhardt to the SOS, Aug.27, 1941. Ibid, p.428  
 6. Cordell Hull with the Soviet Ammbassador, Oumansky, Washington, Aug.27,1941, Ibid, pp.434-5.

are directed solely and exclusively against the danger created by the hostile activity of the Germans in Persia. As soon as this danger threatening the interests of Persia and of the USSR has been removed, the Soviet Government, in discharge of its obligation under the Soviet-Persian Treaty of 1921, will at once withdraw the Soviet troops from the confines of Persia."<sup>7</sup>

The British Government felt that Eden's public statement, on August 26, had made the British position clear, and, therefore, any further statement would serve no useful purpose. The last paragraph of Eden's statement reads;

".....His Majesty's Government have no designs against the independence and territorial integrity of Iran and any measures they take will be directed solely against the attempts of the Axis Powers to establish their control in Iran."<sup>8</sup>

On August 28, the British Minister and Soviet Ambassador were separately summoned by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Suhailī, and told that the Government had given orders to the armed forces to cease all opposition, and was prepared to meet any terms.<sup>9</sup> This was partly because of the fear of the Russians who were making rapid headway and would reach Tihṛān within the next twenty-four hours.

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7. For the full text see Appendix II. Text of Note presented to the Persian Ambassador in Moscow by M. Molotov on August 25, 1941. Confidential, E 5795/3326/34, FO 371/27218.

8. Ambassador in the UK, Winant, to the SOS, Aug. 28, 1941. US. F.R., vol. III, 1941, fin. p. 441. For the full text see 740.0011 European War 1939/14415.

9. "Iran" (newspaper), 19 Shahrivar 1320 (Sept. 10, 1941)



On August 30, the British and Russian terms were communicated to the Iranian Government. They were not as severe as the Government had been expecting. On September 9, Suhailī reported the Allies' terms to the Majlis, according to which;

1. The Russians would withdraw north of the following line; from the Iraq frontier to Ushnū, thence in an easterly direction through Haidarābād, Miyānduāb, Zanjān, and Qazvīn, northeast to Khurramābād (on the Caspian); east to Bābulsar, south to Zīrab, Simnān, northeast to Shāhrūd, ‘Alīābād, and north to the Russian border.

2. British would withdraw west and south of the following lines; Khāniqāin eastward to Kirmānshāh ; in an easterly direction through Khurramābād (Luristan), Masjid Sulaimān, Haftgil, Gachsārān; southwest to Bandar Dailam ( on the Persian Gulf).

3. Occupation of both zones would be temporary.

4. The Iranian Government would expel all German nationals within one week, although a few technicians who were not employed in the communications and military, would be allowed to remain, but the Government would supply the British and Russian authorities with the names of those who remained.

5. The Iranian Government would undertake not to allow entry of Germans into Iran.

6. The Iranian Government would provide full facilities



for transit through Iran of war materials and supplies but not troops.

7. Iran would maintain a policy of strict neutrality.

8. The British and Russians would maintain friendly relations with Iran, and would help her with economic needs.

9. The British would continue to pay the oil royalties.

10. The Russians would continue to pay the fisheries royalties.

11. British and Russian troops would stop further advance, and would withdraw at once when the situation permitted.<sup>10</sup>

In its reply to the British and Russian terms, the Iranian Government accepted the terms in principle with few exceptions. The Government requested that the British zone be altered to exclude Dizfūl and Khurramābād and that the Russian zone be amended to exclude Qazvīn, Simnān, and Shāhrūd. This was mainly for fear of the Russians being so near Tih-rān, who might seek a pretext to occupy the capital. In fact, Bullard had expressed this fear to Dreyfus.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the Iranian Government made the following observations that;

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10. Ibid.

11. Dreyfus to the SOS, Sept. 3, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 448.

1. the Government hoped that Iranian independence and right to administer the country would continue,

2. the police would immediately resume their duties,

3. the Government would not be expected to pay expenses of occupying forces,

4. in order to avoid conflicts the forces would have as little as possible contact with the people,

5. the Allies would buy the goods formerly bought by Germany,

6. arms and ammunition which had fallen into Allied hands would be returned,

7. compensation would be made for lives and property lost after resistance ceased,

8. prohibition on entry of Germans would last only for the duration of the war,

9. the Allies would withdraw their forces when the situation permitted.

10. the Government would agree to the expulsion of the Germans but expected the Allies to arrange for their safe conduct.<sup>12</sup>

The Iranian Government had found the British proposed zone of occupation reasonable as it was obviously limited to the protection of the oil fields and the facilitating of railway transport. Besides, the Government did not apprehend the British occupation.<sup>13</sup> But the Soviet zone

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12. Ibid.

13. Steinhardt (Meeting with Sa'id) to the SOS, Sept 7, 1941. US. F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.456-7.

was unreasonably five times greater than the British, and the Government was fearful of both the Soviet Union and communism, and by no means persuaded that the Russians would ultimately withdraw. It was also concerned lest the Shāh should refuse to accept the Soviet zone.

However, the Russians refused the Iranian request for the alteration of their zone and the compensation, but the British approved of the stationing of Iranian troops in Dizfūl and Khurramābād.

Threatened with the occupation of Tihrān, the Government accepted the terms, hoping that the advance of troops would stop. But later, on September 17, on the grounds that the Iranian Government had been unable to expel the Germans, Allied troops marched into Tihrān.

Although the position of Furūghī's Cabinet in accepting the Allies' terms was not defensible, it deserved credit, Bullard reported;

"Soviet Ambassador and I asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs today why Persian Government allowed their cause to go undefended: only articles had been on other side, viz. those written before military resistance ceased and objectionable one summarised in my telegram No.706 (E5554). He said that this had not been overlooked and implied that it would part of campaign for reform..."<sup>14</sup>

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14. Bullard to FO, Sept.14, 1941. E 5623/3326/34, FO 371/27218.



This action and Suhailī's subsequent talk with Bullard and Smirnov could only be interpreted as the Cabinet's attempts to rid itself of the Shāh's influence.

## II. Internment of Germans

Riẓā Shāh and his Government were seriously concerned with the safe return of the Germans from Iran. The Shāh suggested to Ettel that Germany should take steps with the Turkish Government so that the latter would bring influence to bear upon the British and Russians to grant safe conduct for the return of the Germans. The German Foreign Ministry did not like this suggestion. They commented on Ettel's report;

"It would be out of the question for us to approach our enemies through Turkey in this manner, in the role of supplicants, as it were; but a friendly talk would be held with the Turkish Government to the end that it should on its motion and on the strength of its treaty obligations do everything which is possible."<sup>15</sup>

Therefore it was suggested that Ambassador von Papen be instructed to undertake such a démarche with the Turkish Government, and at the same time the Turkish Ambassador in Germany be informed.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Ettel had approached the American Minister in Tihrān to request his good offices

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15. Weizsäcker (comment on Ettel's, Aug.25, Top secret) No.240, Aug.26, 1941, fn. German Foreign Policy, vol.XIII, p.380.

16. Ibid.

"with the British and Russian authorities to ensure humane treatment of the 900 Germans" who had taken refuge in the German Legation. The American Minister reported;

"He seemed honestly to fear the lives of Germans on the arrival of the Russian troops and stated that he much preferred to have them turned over to the British rather than the Russians."<sup>17</sup>

In late August Ettel had made a statement to Suhailī that the German colony would have made the journey to Turkey through Iraq and Syria, as Germany had preferred to have the Germans travel from Iran to Turkey through that route rather than through the Russian-occupied area.<sup>18</sup> But Bullard had offered a suggestion which would have prevented the Germans falling into Russians hands. According to it, the British Government was prepared to receive the Germans in Ahvāz; they would there have been taken over by British military authorities for ultimate internment in India.<sup>19</sup> Suhailī put the British plan to Ettel and explained that the Iranian Government would endeavour to find a solution acceptable for the parties concerned. But Ettel had gained a very gloomy impression of this plan so he wrote; " I am no longer in any doubt that the Iranian Government is prepared to throw the

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17. Dreyfus to the SOS, Aug.31, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.444.

18. Ettel to FM, Most secret, No.263, Sept.1, 1941. German Foreign Policy, vol.XIII, p.420.

19. Dreyfus (Meeting with Bullard, to the SOS. Sept.1, 1941, US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.445.

German colony to the wolves if Tihhrān is threatened with enemy occupation."<sup>20</sup>

On September 1, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires in Tihhrān received instruction from his Government to give the Germans refuge in the Turkish Embassy from where they would go to Turkey with a view to facilitating their eventual return to Germany.<sup>21</sup> This step, on the part of the Turkish Government could definitely cause the British to stiffen their terms since it had interfered with the British Plan for the disposition of the Germans. And indeed, it did. On September 2, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires received new instructions authorising him to grant refuge only to those Germans who were in the occupied areas.<sup>22</sup> In other words refusing the protection of the Germans, since Tihhrān had still not been occupied. Although the Turkish Government was quick in changing its former offer in order to avoid serious consequences from which Iran might suffer, it did not stop the British departing from their original plan.

On September 5, the British and Russian notes for the expulsion of Axis nationals were delivered to the Iranian Foreign Ministry. According to the notes, the expulsion of the German, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Rumanian nationals had been required. Moreover, the

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20. Ettel to FM, No.263, op.cit.

21. Dreyfus to the SOS, No.130, Sept.1, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.445-6.

22. Dreyfus to the SOS, No.132, Sept.2, 1941. Ibid, p.446.



legations of these countries had to leave Iran, and the German agents were to be surrendered to the British and Soviet authorities in Iran instead of being expelled.<sup>23</sup>

These demands represented fundamental infringement of Iran's sovereignty. The Foreign Minister felt that the Cabinet should have to resign rather than submit to those demands. When Bullard reported that the American Minister was also of the opinion that the Iranian Cabinet should resign rather than hand over the Germans to the British and Russians, the Foreign Office commented; "the American Minister's experience of Persia is short."<sup>24</sup> The Foreign Office was right, for they knew that they would make good their threat to the Iranians that the British and Russians would themselves come to Tih̄rān and get the Germans. On this line, Eden, in reply to questions about the closure of the Axis Legations in Tih̄rān, informed the House of Commons;

"steps are being taken by the Iranian Government to hand over the German community in Iran to the British and Soviet Governments."<sup>25</sup>

The request for closure of the German Legation in Tih̄rān was in fact welcomed by the German Foreign Ministry, though they apparently use this issue as a pretext for a

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- 23 "Iran", 19 Shahrivar 1320 (Sept. 10, 1941. See also Dreyfus to the SOS, Sept. 5, 1941; Steinhardt (Moscow) to the SOS, Sept. 8, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 452, p. 458-9. Because of Russian insistence the Bulgarians were allowed to remain in Iran, see Dreyfus to SOS, Sept. 7, 1941. Ibid, p. 455.
24. Minute on Bullard, Sept. 8, 1941. E 5419/3326/34, FO 371/27217.
25. 10th Sept., 1941, H.C. Deb., 5th Series, vol. 374, col. 159 (Answering Sir John Mellor). Also see, answer to Shinwell, Ibid.

propaganda campaign against the Allies. As early as September 3, Hitler had expressed the wish that, primarily, every effort should be made to get the Germans out of Iran, and then disband and withdraw the Legation. Hewel, of the German Foreign Ministry wrote;

"The personnel of the Legation, he(Hitler) said, should be gradually withdrawn until no one was left. It did not matter what the Iranians would do then. The reason why the Führer is giving orders to pull all Germans out of Iran is, apart from political motives, his desire to have complete freedom of action in Iran when our troops will have advanced further, He would like to prevent having his freedom of action restricted by the presence of Germans in Iran."<sup>26</sup>

However, for technical reasons and because of the refusal of Turkey to offer any protective measures to the Germans of the immediate withdrawal of the Legation, it was decided that the plan would not be considered until safe conduct was assured for the departure of the German colony. Had the Anglo-Russian demands been restricted to only the closure of the Legation they would have been what the Germans themselves had planned. But the demand for the Germans to be handed over to the Allies was, of course, disquieting. So, when Suhaili told Ettel of the Allied decision he bitterly protested against it.

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26. Memorandum, Sept.4, 1941, No.280. German Foreign Policy, vol.XIII, Series D, p.452.



In Germany, a reprisal plan was proposed according to which the British subjects in the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey and the Soviet subjects in the areas under German control could be interned as the retaliatory measure.<sup>27</sup> Hitler proposed that for every German deported from Iran, ten selected British, including the prominent Englishmen such as Churchill's nephew, be deported from the island of Jersey, and their property to be distributed among the population of French origin there.<sup>28</sup> However, a communication on the proposed line was transmitted to the British Government through the Swiss Government, while "expressing the willingness of the German Government to refrain from deporting British subjects and also to grant safe conduct for 132 British volunteers from the Finnish war who were stranded in Sweden, provided that the British Government would refrain from interning the members of the German colony in Iran."<sup>29</sup> A similar telegram was also sent to the Soviet Government through the Bulgarian Government. The Soviet Government "rejected without examination the impudent reply of the German Government."<sup>30</sup>

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27. Cf. documents Nos. 280, 287, & 305 (Sept. 4, 7, & 12, 1941), German Foreign Policy, vol. XIII.
28. Memo by an official of the Foreign Minister's Personal Staff (Hewel) Sept. 12, 1941, No. 306, Ibid. In document No. 317, Sept. 14, the sentence concerning the distribution of the property was crossed out. The following marginal notes on this reads; "To be withheld for the time being. (Ribbentrop)."
29. Ribbentrop to Ettel, Sept. 7, 1941, No. 287, see also fn(4), Ibid., p. 462.
30. See document No. 305, f.n. (1), Sept. 12, 1941. Ibid., p. 482. For the postponement of the reprisals by Germany, and her new proposals for the exchange of civilian internees, see document No. 317, f.n. (2) Ibid., p. 507



On September 12, negotiations about the German colony were carried out after a short break down<sup>31</sup>, on the Iranian side by the Director General of the Foreign Ministry, Sayyāh, and the Director of the Central European Department, Intizām, and on the German side by Ettel. The Swedish Charge d'Affaires attended as the neutral party. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify the list of persons who were to be surrendered.

Apparently, Suhailī had promised Bullard that 10.p.m. of September 12 would be the final and last time limit for the departure of those Germans who were to be interned. Ironically, the meeting ended at 10.p.m. when Sayyāh announced that the persons who had been clarified in the list must be at the railway station by midnight. This was obviously impossible for technical reasons. Ettel wrote;

"There ensued a discussion in which the representatives of the Iranian Foreign Ministry presented the highly pitiful spectacle of indecisive and despicable officials, lacking any sense of responsibility. The reason for this was the fact that once again the Iranian Foreign Minister had made binding promises to the enemy powers which he could not fulfil."<sup>32</sup>

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31. The German Legation at Shimiran was surrounded by Iranian troops in connection with Iranian allegations that there were armed men inside the compound, Ettel protested against this and broke off the meeting and told that he would not attend unless the troops were removed. An account of this event is cited in Khātirāt-i siyāsi Farukh (Mu'tasim-ul-saltana), p.439.
32. Ettel to FM, No.311, Sept.13,1941. German Foreign Policy, op.cit., p.494.

Then, Ettel continued;

"In the course of the conversation M.Sayyah admitted in tearful accents that the British Minister had baldly stated to the Iranian Foreign Minister that if this limit were not observed the consequence would be the occupation of Tehran by English and Russian troops who would themselves then round up the German colony."<sup>33</sup>

Since all the Iranian authorities shied away from making another approach to the British Minister, the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires, Ripa, at last, contacted Bullard and obtained his consent to an extension of the deadline to 5 p.m. of September 13.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Ettel wrote;

"After the two (Sayyāh and Intizām) shaking and trembling, had left my office at 10.40 p.m, I called my staff together and explained to them that the moment now had come where further delay of departures of the comrades on the list would not only be useless but would jeopardize the safe conduct promised for women and children."<sup>35</sup>

The first trainload of Germans, 72 for Ahvāz and eight for Qazvin, left in the morning of September 13. Ettel left Tihhrān for Turkey on September 17, accompanied by 250 women and 140 children. By September 21, about four hundred German men of military age had been turned over to the British and about 60 to the Soviets. Approximately

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33. Ibid, pp.494-5.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

100 men over 45 years of age were allowed to remain in Tihhrān under the care of the Swedish Legation.<sup>36</sup>

The German episode did not finish there. Despite Ettel's promise to Furūghī, some Germans went into hiding, and organized a fifth column organization in collaboration with pro-German Iranians. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

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36. Ibid. Suhailī had requested the American Minister to assign the Military Attaché or some members of staff, with the British and Russian consent, to accompany the Axis diplomatic members and nationals to Turkey through the Russian occupied zone. The Soviet Ambassador rejected this on the grounds that it would be a reflection on Soviet justice. See documents; Dreyfus to the SOS, Sept. 13 and 14, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, pp 459-60.



III. The impact of the occupation on the internal situation and the introduction of reforms September-December, 1941.

I

Once asked whether Madame de Pompadour's renowned phrase, "Après nous le déluge" reflected his own sentiments, Muhammad Riżā Shāh had, admittedly, nodded.<sup>37</sup> And indeed, similarly, after the fall of his father, Iran experienced, for a good period of time, the turbulent existence of a society in the throes of chaos, if not revolution.

If the foreign powers were partly responsible for such state of affairs this was not to exonerate Riżā Shāh from blame, for he was as much responsible as the society as a whole for the predicament in which Iran found herself later. He had engineered the political system so as to necessitate the institutional centrality of him (the monarchy). His name was a magic one in the country in preserving law and order and, whatever the temptation to banditry, the tribal population had such a fear of him that they dared not move. Quite predictably, when he fell, a power vacuum ensued. Disorder became prevalent, separatist movements were revived, political parties mushroomed. The last named were mainly based on personal and sectarian interests rather than national.

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37. Cited in Kambiz Afrachteh, "Theocratic Populism, Superpower Rivalry And The Balkanisation of Iran: A Scenario", World Review, vol.20 No.3, August 1981, p31.

All these had, however, their roots implanted in the barren political environment that had been created by coercion. In the final analysis, Riżā Shāh's policy was to subordinate political development to what he regarded as being the exigencies of economic trade-off. But it might perhaps be mentioned that, while Riżā Shāh was disliked for the tyranny of his rule, there was a recognition among the more enlightened that under him Iran was able to achieve a very considerable measure of progress. There was no desire to go back on this, but a wish to preserve and continue what had been begun by him.

Apparently, for many, the disappearance of Riżā Shāh had opened up a new era for better social justice, reforms, and political grouping as well as intrigues. It is ironic to observe that progress brings destruction.

## II

Apart from the impact of Riżā Shāh's fall, the occupation of the country by foreign troops had its own effect in the internal situation of Iran. The general belief among the public which tended to grow day by day was that the Russians did not intend to leave the country. In contrast with the entry of hated Russians, the advent of the British forces was not viewed unfavourably.<sup>38</sup>

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38. Press Attaché, Lambton, to Bullard (to FO), confidential Oct. 4, 1941. E 721/42/34, FO 371/27157.

This more favourable attitude was, of course, relative. The Iranians did not like either, and many resented the presence of the alien forces in their country, particularly in Tih<sup>r</sup>ān,

The popularity that the British had gained, resulting from the abdication of Riżā Shāh, began to wane rapidly. There was a growing tendency to blame them, this time, for the misdeeds of the Russians.<sup>39</sup>

In the Russian occupied zone, the administration had broken down. Apparently, there was little open interference with the civil government by the Russian authorities, but the disarming of the police and gendarmerie and lack of respect shown to officials had made it difficult for the Iranian Government to function. To add to this, the corruption, inefficiency, and lack of public spirit among the government's officials had made this paralysis worse.

In early September, large Russian forces arrived at Mashhad. They dropped leaflets, inciting the people to revolt.<sup>40</sup> They soon began the Bolshevisation of Mashhad. Private cars were confiscated, Iranian Officers were arrested and removed. The British Consul in Mashhad reported;

"....Throughout whole of Iran people are praying for British intervention and if early occupation up to Birjand were possible it would allay panic and prevent chaos that will inevitably follow further Russian encroachment."<sup>41</sup>

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39. Ibid.

40. Britconsul to Bullard (to FO), Sept. 10, 1941. E 5494/3326/34, FO 371/27217.

41. From C-in-C India to the War Office, Sept. 8, 1941. E5510/3326/34, FO 371/27217.



In Āzerbāyījān the situation was more grave. On their arrival the Soviet forces armed many Armenian irregulars to keep order in Āzerbāyījān, but these Armenians were disarmed later. About early September, a large open-air meeting was held at Tabrīz and was chiefly attended by the Armenians, who demanded independence for Āzerbāyījān and its eventual federation with the Soviet Union, but the Soviet military authorities wisely prevented a second meeting from being held with the same object in view. A petition was, however, circulated in the same sense. The American Minister reported; "Russians in occupied zone in Iran are at least lending sympathy to Armenians and to others in separatist movements."<sup>42</sup> This was an indication of Soviet activities inconsistent with the assurances respecting the territorial integrity of Iran.

A certain Dr. Cochrane, an American missionary doctor, who was in Tabrīz, gave a moderate account of the events in Tabrīz. While admitting the looting by Armenians and rabbles, mainly of premises of Germans and fleeing Iranians, his report held the view that public security on the whole was good and Soviet troops well disciplined.<sup>43</sup> A series of reports by the British consul in Tabrīz painted a much more gloomy and sorry picture of the situation in that area, including opening of jails, requisitioning of houses

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42. Dreyfus to the SOS, Sept. 19, 1941, p. 461. Also see, Hull to Dreyfus, Sept. 25; Hull to Steinhardt, Sept. 25, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 462.

43. Dreyfus to the SOS, Sept. 26, 1941, Ibid, p. 463.

and crops, political intrigue, looting by mobs, and sympathy on the part of the Russians to separatist movements. Needless to say, the Iranian reports were similar to the British. However, when these reports reached the Foreign Office, Eden put the matter to Maisky, and added; "...It seemed to me most important that no encouragement should be given to the movement for autonomy in Āzarbāyījān by the Soviet Government. The effect of any such action on Turkey and on the Moslem population in other parts of Persia would be deplorable."<sup>44</sup> Maisky replied that he felt that the Soviet authorities had no such intention.<sup>45</sup> Obviously, any encouragement of such a movement would have, no doubt, given German propaganda an effective weapon for use in Turkey or Iran.

The Russians had quelled the Āzarbāyījān independence movement in October. Nevertheless, they did not stop subversive activities in meddling in the internal affairs of Iran. For instance, in September, they had begun printing a newspaper in Persian called Afkār-i khalq (Thoughts of the people). Its object was to disseminate Russian propaganda, and to criticize the Iranian Government.

In the middle of September the Soviet Ambassador presented to Suhailī a list of reforms that the Iranian Government should carry out, e.g., transfer of crown

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44. Eden (Meeting with Maisky), to Sir S. Cripps (Moscow) Confidential, Sept. 23, 1941 E6000/42/34, FO 371/27153.

45. Ibid. The US Government supported Eden's view, and instructed its Ambassador in London to discuss with Maisky that the US Government was concerned with the preserving the political independence and territorial integrity of Iran. See, Hull to Winant, Oct. 8, 1941. US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 469.



property to the people and reduction of taxation. But two of them aroused much anxiety among the government officials, vis., (a) there should be a moderate constitution, giving to the majority of the population the right to elect the Majlis, (b) there should be, at least a minimum of local self-government.<sup>46</sup> One could understand the dislike of the Āzarbāyījānīs for their central Government who had ignored them in the time of peace and ran away the moment danger appeared, and a minimum of self-government seemed to be the least they might expect to obtain under a constitutional regime. Moreover, the Soviet Government might have felt that they were forced to adopt an active policy to counteract German propaganda amongst the Armenians and the attraction of Turkey for the Moslems of Āzarbāyījān. This was, of course, the pessimistic version of the argument.

There is, of course, much to be said in favour of local self-government. But the Iranian Government, while admitting such rights for Āzarbāyījān and other provinces, feared that in the chaotic situation in which the country was, such measures might have the undesirable effect of encouraging the separatist tendencies in Āzarbāyījān. Bullard duly wrote;

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46. Bullard (Meeting with Suhailī) to FO, Sept. 19, 1941. E 5871, FO 371/27219.



"....Possibly the separatist policy of the Soviet military authorities in Tabriz would be repudiated by the Soviet Government but the General Officer Commanding (grp.omt.?has) political officer attached to him and would hardly act without authority . I will talk about this to the Soviet Ambassador but he has little influence with the Army Commanders even if he thought fit to use it in this connection."<sup>47</sup>

Quite predictably, Vishinski<sup>48</sup> denied that the Soviet Government was lending sympathy to the Armenian separatist movement. He attributed the matter to German propaganda, and said, "the Soviet Government has no knowledge of any such activities by agents of the Soviet Government..."<sup>49</sup>

The other proposed Soviet reform envisaged the extension of the basis on which the elections for the Majlis were held. Here again there might be much talk, particularly on a theoretical level, in favour of a wider franchise than was at the time in force under the Iranian constitution. To carry out such reform would have meant holding fresh elections. It is admitted that elections which were in progress at the time, had begun under Rīzā Shāh's control,<sup>50</sup> and that some members who returned, might be considered as the Shāh's nominees, but to dissolve the Majlis would have involved departure from the

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47. Ibid.

48. Andrei Yanaurievich Vishinsky; Soviet Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

49. Steinhardt (Meeting with Vishinsky) to the SOS, Oct.11, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941,p.471.

50. Farmān for the election of 13th Majlis was issued in khurdād 1320 (May 1941).

constitution, and it would be an unfortunate precedent.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the Government knew that fresh elections would only produce communist deputies in the areas occupied by the Soviet troops.

The current belief among some people was that the Russian had been in favour of fresh elections, but later on they were told by the British that re-election would result in pro-German deputies being elected. Therefore, according to those, the Russians did not obtrude this demand on the Government.

It was perhaps difficult to satisfy demands for reform without the danger of anarchy which would increase more pressure on the Government and its task of observing interests of the country. Furūghī was probably inclined to induce most objectionable deputies to resign, and hold fresh elections for their constituencies, but except for these changes, he ought to carry on with the Majlis elected, and ask people to judge it by its works.

In early October, Soviet authorities seized many goods wholly paid for by Iranian importers on the grounds that Bank Millī's list, which had been hurriedly prepared, did not mention these goods. Many of the imports belonged to merchants in other parts of Iran, with whom communication

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51. In reply to the petition sent to the Shāh by a group of Tih<sup>r</sup>ān population, on Aban 19, 1320 (Nov. 10, 1941), asking re-election of the Majlis, Furūghī sent a telegram to the Shāh, which was published in Tih<sup>r</sup>ān newspapers on Aban 21, explaining (to the public) the unlawfulness of cancelling elections by the Government.



was not possible. The Russians ignored protests, and dispatched the imports to the Soviet Union.<sup>52</sup> The report of the British Consul in Tabrīz reads;

"Soviet authorities have taken every thing from the recently evacuated Government offices and schools on the pretext of furnishings needed for their own offices here, but I am categorically assured that the railway wagon-loads of miscellaneous furniture and household effects are being despatched to Russia. Searchers of private houses continue, sometimes unauthorized parties of Soviet officers demanding money..."<sup>53</sup>

By the middle of October, Bullard's reports, however, showed better cooperation on the part of the Soviet authorities in transportation, re-establishment of relatively free road communication between important cities, and an improvement in the general conduct of the Russians in Tabrīz. Iranian police were also rearmed. But the Russians continued to spread communist propaganda. For example, on a Soviet invitation to sporting events held on October 12, in Tihhrān the slogan "Proletariat of all countries unite", was printed. On October 9, the Tihhrān newspaper, *Ittīlā'āt*, published an article which described the Soviet occupation of Iranian towns in the most favourable light. Suhailī, confidentially, informed Dreyfus that the article had been published only under pressure from the Soviet Ambassador.<sup>54</sup> On the same day Tass refuted the

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52. Britconsul(Tabrīz) to Bullard (to FO), No.940, Oct.7, 1941. E 6432 FO 371/27234.

53. Britconsul (Tabrīz) to Bullard (to FO), No.941, Ibid.

54. Dreyfus to the SOS, Oct.13, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.473.



report circulated by Berlin and Rome radios that the Soviet Union was insisting on incorporation of North Western Iran and that General Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commander in Chief of the British Armed Forces in India, had approved this demand.<sup>55</sup>

However, in the Russian zone, communist propaganda continued to be spread by word of mouth, motion pictures and in Tabriz by the theatre and registration of Soviet sympathisers.<sup>56</sup>

In December there appeared again further disquieting evidence of Soviet separatist schemes in Iran. The Soviet political officer collected chiefs from Saqqiz and Savujbulāq areas, and some of Shāhsavan tribesmen of Eastern Āzarbāyījān, and took them to Tabriz as "guests" and sent them to Baku ostensibly for a week's cultural pleasure trip.<sup>57</sup>

However, the atmosphere of mutual distrust between the Iranians and British on one side, and the Russians on the other, continued to exist. Each side were accusing the other of lack of cooperation, as for instance, when several Āzarbāyījānīs were murdered, in December, in Tihhrān and Tabriz apparently for political reasons, for which the Russian agents were accused. The Russians denied it, and

55. Cripps to FO, No.1277, Oct.9, 1941. E 5481/211/38, FO 371/27185.

56. Extracts from the Second Secretary of the US Legation, James S. Moose report of fact finding visit to the Russian zone, (to) Dreyfus to SOS, No.210, Oct.29, 1941. op.cit, p.474-5.

57. Bullard to FO, Dec.3, 1941, E 7974, and Dec.6, 1941. E 805/5068/34, FO 371/21756. Minute on the former document reads "We are considering the possibility of appointing political officers one of whose functions would be to strengthen our influence with the tribes, particularly the Kurds and Bakhtiari."

demanding that the Iranian Government should reduce the police force in Tabriz, withdraw Colonel Saif, Iranian police chief, and close the newspaper "Voice of Āzarbāyījān".<sup>58</sup>

### III

When the Anglo-Russian troops moved into Iran in August, they needed local currency for their expenses. The Iranian Government had, for some years, imposed different rates of exchange for sterling. While the official rate was 68 Rls. for a pound sterling, there were rates of 80, 120 and 170 for sterling obtained from export of goods classified by the Government as the first, second and third. Tourists and foreign representatives could obtain 170 Rls to a pound, whereas the AIOC only got 68 Rls. This discriminatory rate of exchange was, however, pernicious to the economy, and both fictitious rates of 68 and 170 Rls. were unrealistic.

The Soviet Government was not interested in Iranian rates of exchange, for they could obtain rials through the fisheries. When they invaded Iran, they, naturally, needed more local currency. The Iranian Government was asked to advance them 40 million rials credit in exchange for delivery of sugar and textile to the Government. The

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58. Dreyfus to the SOS, Dec. 11, 1941, US.F.R., vol. III, 1941, p. 476.



Russians promised such delivery, but they began to sell those goods to selected merchants, thus evading customs. The Iranian Government blocked the credit. Later on, the official request was presented to the Iranian Government to allow the Russians to sell goods to merchants.<sup>59</sup>

The Iranian Government's problem in this matter was its dispute with the British over the rate of exchange. Abbas Qulī Gulshā'iyān was the Finance Minister in Furūghī's first cabinet. Before the occupation, being the Assistant Under Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, he was made Minister by Riżā Shāh, according to Bullard, for his statement to the Majlis that the crown jewels were all in the Bank Milli.<sup>60</sup> A few days after the occupation, the meeting, which had been arranged between Gulshā'iyān and Bullard to discuss local currency needs of the British forces in Iran, did not result in any agreement between the two sides. Bullard was insisting on his demand; 170 Rls. to a pound, while the Minister was not prepared to offer more than 90 Rls.<sup>61</sup> To concede with Bullard's demand would have brought a higher inflation rate which had steadily been rising since 1937.

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59. Bullard to FO, Nov.25,1941. E 7793, FO 371/27155.

60. Bullard to FO, No.818, Sept.22, 1941. E 5965, FO 371/27153. According to Gulshā'iyān's memoire (see Valizadeh, *op.cit.*, Taqāzāhā Aghāz mishavad, pp.365-383) his appointment as the Minister of Finance was made for his meticulous efforts to supply sufficient rice and coal for Tihhrān population during the first days of the occupation of Iran, on Riżā Shāh's order. The question about crown jewels was raised in the Majlis on September 17, while he had been appointed to the Ministry on August 27. Therefore, his account of his rise to the ministerial post seems to be correct.

61. In fact Gulshā'iyā n's original offer was the official rate of 68 Rls. Later, upon orders from Riżā Shāh, he agreed to offer the rate of 80 Rls., then 90 Rls.



As a retaliatory measure, the British troops in Khūzistān and Kīrmānshāh stopped lorries carrying wheat to Tihrān. When the news reached Tihrān, Gulshā'iyān told Bullard; "if you wish to cause famine in Tihrān, thus rioting and revolution, I will have nothing to say any more, otherwise you should order British troops not to interfere with the transportation."<sup>62</sup> According to Gulshā'iyān, Bullard phoned General Fraser and asked him to send orders to British military authorities in those areas to release the lorries.<sup>63</sup>

No concrete agreement was reached between the two sides until the removal of Gulshā'iyān from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Trade in Furūghī's second cabinet, and his replacement with Dr. Musharaf Nafīsī,<sup>64</sup> the legal Adviser to the AIOC. Nafīsī raised the Official rate of exchange from 68 to 140 Rls. Economically speaking, he de-valued the rial, thus causing higher inflation.<sup>65</sup>

The currency question was one of those chronic problems which often caused disputes between the Iranian and British Governments. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

62. Gulshā'iyān's memoir, op.cit., p.372.

63. Ibid. For the full account of this meeting, see pp.371-3.

64. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 535.

65. When Nafīsī was the AIOC Adviser, insisted on that the Government should agree to 90 instead of 68 rials for the company's sterling converted to the rial. Two articles on the rate of exchange, attacking Nafīsī's policy, were published in Ra'd-i Imrūz, No.267, 4 Aban, 1323 (Oct.26, 1943), and Sitāra, "nirkh-i arz", No.1262, 11 Isfand, 1320, (March 2, 1942).

## IV

At 4p.m. in the afternoon of September 17, 1941, after taking the oath in the Majlis, Muhammad Rīzā Shāh Pahlavī<sup>66</sup> made a declaration, stressing the necessity for closer cooperation between the Sovereign Government and the Parliament, if a consitutional government was to be a reality. The declaration continued that formal orders had been issued to all officials, civil and military, reminding them that any infringements of existing laws and regulations and encroachment on the rights of others would be punished according to laws, and the Government were specifically charged with ensuring the security of the individual in accordance with 'habeas corpus'. The Government must also work out and institute as soon as possible with the approval of the Majlis, a complete programme of reforms including social, economic and financial. Finally, the Shāh pledged again to carry out his duties in conformity with the law and ordered the Government to solve existing problems and restore things to normal in close collaboration with "Governments of the countries whose interests are linked to ours."<sup>67</sup> On the following day, the Shāh issued a farman, granting a general amnesty to political prisoners.<sup>68</sup>

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66. See Personalities, Appendix I. (Hereafter cited as the Shāh) p. 512.

67. "Iran", 26 Shahrivar 1320 (Sept. 18, 1941).

68. According to articles 54 and 55 of Iranian Public Criminal Law, the sovereign had the right to grant amnesty to political prisoners.



It seemed, indeed, to be a new era. On the same day as the Shāh's inauguration, the Majlis deputies, who were once described by Bullard as Riżā Shāh's orphans, had spoken out in a private session in the Majlis. They discussed crown jewels, the restoration of justice, the return of property to former owners, public security, the reduction of budget and taxation, the cancellation of the law abolishing religious endowments. When Bullard commented that the last named proposal seemed a reactionary attempt by mullas to get back their former influence, the Foreign Office reaction was;

"We should ignore for time present.  
We are bound to interfere in so many directions that we hardly want to start defending the Shah's anti-mullah policy."<sup>69</sup>

Later in the month, the Foreign Office changed its attitude towards the reactionary movements by mullas. Perhaps, they realized that they had committed a great blunder in being indifferent on this matter, and the results of this blunder would soon come home to plague them. Indications of this realization became conspicuous after the BBC Arabic broadcast of September 7, which had spoken of the joy of Arabs in Southern Iran when after the entry of British troops they were able to resume their traditional dress and mullas their turbans. Disappointed

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69. Minute on Bullard, Sept. 21, 1941. E 5863/3326/34, FO 371/27219.



with this broadcast, Bullard wrote;

"To many Persians this had a reactionary ring and I think that great care must be exercised in this connection. Shah may have seized for himself some of the Mosque properties but return to days when revenues were dissipated by Mullahs is undesirable. Compulsion exercised by the Shah about abandonment of veil by women and national costume permitted, was bad but it would be disastrous if encouragement were given to complete reaction which would restore influence of Mullahs, veil all women, stop education of girls and so on. Subject is complicated by modernistic attitude of Turkey on one side and more conservative position of Moslems in (grp.undec.? Persia) on the other and I suggest that we avoid it until we have worked out a policy....."<sup>70</sup>

While agreed with Bullard, the Foreign Office commented;

"...one of the few good feature of the ex-Shah's regime was his destruction of the power of the Mullahs. We have nothing to hope from them: their inclinations are naturally towards xenophobia and if we keep bringing them back to their old position of influence they will only turn against us."<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, when attempts were made to hold the ceremonies known as Rauzakhānī and Ta'zia in the open<sup>72</sup> in the British zone, Bullard sent instructions to Ahvāz

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70. Bullard to FO No.747, Sept.16,1941. E 5808, FO 371/27219.

71. Minute by Pink on Bullard, Ibid.

72. During the last years of Rīzā Shāh's regime, these ceremonies had to take place indoors by the Government order. Ta'zia is an intense public demonstration of mourning on the anniversary of the death of the Shi'a saints, viz., Imam Alī, Husain, ..The procession is marked by intense religious hysteria, flagellation, self inflicted sword (qama) cuts on head. Ta'zia has been widely revived since 1979.

and Kirmānshāh, which read;

".... if such an attempt should be made in your district I consider, subject to views of His Majesty's Government that the military authorities would be justified in discouraging it through local authorities on the grounds of public order."<sup>73</sup>

Having waited so long for the break down of the authority of Rīzā Shāh, the tribes began to revolt again. It had taken him twenty years to disarm these tribes and to start integrating them into the civilized life of the country. In early September, Iranian Kurdistan was suddenly invaded by Iraqi Kurds under the orders of Shaikh Mahmūd. The invading force, numbering some hundred men, surrounded several Iranian frontier posts and penetrated about fifty miles into Iran towards Sannandaj. The British Government acted quickly, and sent instructions to Baghdad that if it became necessary the British troops would have to take action against Shaikh Mahmūd.<sup>74</sup> In October, the situation in Kurdistan was aggravated by the military set back in Saqqiz. Rebel tribesmen, who were supported by hundreds of Iraqi Kurds took Saqqiz for the second time. The Iranian army had to withdraw, leaving central Kurdistan in control of Kurdish rebels who set up a provisional administration to replace the central government administration which had ceased to function

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73. Bullard to Ahvaz and Kermanshah (to FO), Sept. 15, 1941. E 5809, FO 371/27219.

74. Minute by FO on H.M. Consul (Kermanshah) (to Tih-rān), Sept. 8, 1941, E. 5444/3326/34, FO 371/27216.



in a large part of Kurdistān. General Muqaddam, the army commander in Kurdistān, was recalled to Tihhrān as the result of his failure to restore order in the district, and to disarm the tribesmen. It was alleged that he was anti-British and that he deliberately allowed the situation to deteriorate, hoping thereby to create difficulties for the British forces or to oblige the latter to intervene.<sup>75</sup> General Shāhbakhtī<sup>76</sup> was appointed as his successor. When the rebels wished to establish their headquarters at Sannandaj, the British military authorities informed them that the entry into Sannandaj would not be allowed while British troops were there. But they were prepared to receive a deputation to discuss Kurdish grievances with the central government.<sup>77</sup>

It was early in October when the policy which should have to be adopted in connection with tribes in Iran, was discussed among Bullard, General Wavell, and General Quinan. They agreed that it would be undesirable to give any encouragement to the tribes, because: (Bullard wrote);

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75. From consul (Kermanshah) to Tihhrān, Reptd. to FO Oct. 13, 1941, E 6626, FO 371/27155.

76. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 521.

77. Consul to Tihhrān, Oct. 13, 1941. op.cit.



- " (a) it has been laid down by H.M. Government (your telegram No.740) that our object must be to get civil administration running again and we cannot at present have one policy at the centre and a different policy in tribal areas.  
 (b) Otherwise we should find ourselves in endless family and sectional intrigues to little purpose, since serious tribal resistance to a German advance is not to be expected.  
 (c) We must not hold out to the tribes promises which, as in the case of Sheikh of Mohammerah, might not be able to save them from the Central Government."<sup>78</sup>

It was, however, agreed that this policy would not be against paying tribal leaders or elements for specific services such as handing over Germans or helping to protect the oilfields. The comment made by the Foreign Office on this policy was; "This seems a very sound definition of the policy we should take towards tribes."<sup>79</sup>

This policy could be described as 'constructive' non-intervention. In other words, while giving no encouragement to tribes, the British Government wished to strengthen the authority of the Iranian Government vis-à-vis the tribes. For instance, when General Shāhbakhtī was fighting with rebels led by Muhammad Rashīd in Kurdistān and Kirmānshāh in December, the British planes dropped leaflets over the Kurdistān area, encouraging the rebels to cease

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78. Bullard to FO, Oct.2,1941. E 6244/3326/34 FO 371/27220. In the House of Commons, Eden, answering questions about Iran from the floor, said; "It is not the policy of the Allies to intervene in the administration of Persia except where circumstances make our intervention necessary in the Allied interest....". 1st Oct., 1941, H.C.Deb., 5th Series, vol.374, col.554.  
 79. Minute on Bullard. Ibid.

hostilities and surrender themselves to the Iranian forces. In the leaflet it was remarked that the British Government would not support the idea of an independent Kurdish State.<sup>80</sup>

After the abdication of Rīzā Shāh, it was felt that British propaganda policy ought to be altered to positive propaganda in favour of a constitutional government. Bullard recommended that BBC Persian broadcasts should emphasize this point. In the meantime, Furūghī suggested to Bullard that if the British wished he would provide notes from time to time both on this subject and also on British and Russian policy with regard to Iran, which might be broadcast from the BBC.<sup>81</sup> On October 5, the BBC Persian service had a successful talk, "khatāb bi millat-i Irān", giving an account of British policy in Iran;

"....British policy in Iran is based on friendship. Friendship is of two kinds, namely disinterested friendship, and friendship based on interest..... As regards the British Government's friendship towards Iran or any other Government, it is not and cannot be of a disinterested nature. In policy one cannot be without any interest. We can only say that interest may be either genuine or malicious. The policy of the British Government towards Iran is based on genuine interest, that is, we have considered it fit that Iran should be independent, that its territorial integrity should be maintained and that

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80. "Iran", 3 Dai, 1320 (Dec.25,1941). Sarlashgar: Nakhjavān's press conference at the Ministry of War, Tihiran.

81. Bullard to FO, No.760, Sept.17,1941. E 5792, FO 371/27217.



order and security should reign there,<sup>82</sup>  
since Iran is the gate to Iraq....."

This talk had been drafted by Furūghī, and it was meant to be written as from the British point of view, but in such a manner to appeal to the Iranian. The British Legation, in Tihṛān, cut out a short passage which, unless greatly amplified, might have been misunderstood by the Russians. Bullard wrote to London that Furūghī's name should not be associated with the talk. "...He even had the draft copied out by his son, so that the writing might not be recognized," wrote Bullard, "but we have had the amended version in Persian typed so the identity of the writer is buried still deeper."<sup>83</sup>

After the occupation of Tihṛān what little prestige the Cabinet did enjoy seemed to be dying out, chiefly owing to the presence of the foreign armies in the capital. Therefore, in early October, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent two identical notes to the British and Soviet representatives requesting them to take energetic steps towards the evacuation of Tihṛān.<sup>84</sup> Before this note was communicated to London by Bullard, the Foreign Office, had, on its own initiative, asked the Chiefs of Staff to consider whether the Allied forces could safely be withdrawn from

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82. For the full text, see Appendix II. Muṣṭafā Fātiḥ points to this talk as proof of his statement:  
"this is the best document which proves that England, in her relations with Iran, has never considered international laws and traditions, and she has always based her deeds on her own criteria." See Panjāh sāl: naft-i Iran. p. 469.

83. Letter from Bullard to Baxter (FO), No. 631/6/41, Sept. 26, 1941. E 6872/211/34, FO 371/27185.

84. Bullard to FO, No. 942, Oct. 7, 1941. E 4615 FO 371/27234



Tihrān and its immediate neighborhood, or alternatively to what extent they might be reduced. The Chiefs of Staff Committee decided that they had to maintain control in Tihrān, and possibly elsewhere, by inserting their officials in plain clothes into the important posts, on the 'German model'. Then, there would be no need for the British troops to be in close proximity of the capital.<sup>85</sup> Afterwards, Eden suggested to the Soviet Government through Maisky that either at the time of signing the Treaty of Alliance with Iran or as soon thereafter as possible the British and Russian forces should evacuate Tihrān, and return to their zones."To his surprise the Soviet Government indicated its assent almost immediately..."<sup>86</sup>

Tihrān was, however, evacuated on October 18,<sup>87</sup> months before the treaty was signed. The Government regained a breathing space. But later in the month, the Cabinet became the object of much criticism again, not only from place hunters and reformers in a hurry, but from persons who considered that in retaining several members of the ex-Shāh's Cabinet and in not holding fresh election, Furūghī had not cut free from the former regime. There was also a whispering campaign, alleging

85. War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Committee, secret, Oct.2, 1941. E 6540, FO 371/27234.

86. Winant to the SOS, Oct.9, 1941. US.F.R., vol.III, 1941, p.471.

87. "Iran", 26 Mehr, 1320 (Oct.18, 1941). After holding a special ceremony in 'Jalaliya Square' at Northwest Tihrān, the troops left there.

that the Cabinet contained five Jews. The Rome radio had described Furūghī as a Jew (he was of Jewish origin) but local propaganda attributed a Jewish origin in one or two cases and possibly in all, to four other Ministers, including Gulshā'īyān (Finance) and Vasiqī (Industry).

In the meantime, there was a campaign in favour of Ahmad Vusūq<sup>88</sup> for the premiership. Bullard discouraged attempts to involve the Legation into the controversy on his side, partly, according to him, because his personal reputation was not good, and partly because there seemed little likelihood, at the time, of getting keener co-operation from him than from Furūghī's Cabinet. Also, as Bullard wrote;

"...If we begin cabinet making, the Soviet Embassy may have views different from ours. Nevertheless it may be necessary to find a Prime Minister with more energy and determination than Furughi. There is no obvious candidate in this country at present. Taqizadeh or Sayid Zia might do, but it would be fatal to either if it appeared that he had been brought back by us....."<sup>89</sup>

In November, Bullard's reports showed an improvement in Furūghī's health. He, again, wrote; " we should not be in a hurry to change the Cabinet."<sup>90</sup>

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88. See, Personalities, Appendix I, p. 536.

89. Bullard to FO, No.1038, Oct.24, 1941. E 6940, FO 371/27155. The Foreign Office, while approving Bullard's argument, instructed him; "Position will need careful watching and I shall be glad if you will give me as early as possible if you have any reason to consider that our attitude should be modified." FO to Tihārān, No.963. Oct.28. Ibid.

90. Bullard to FO, Nov. 5, 1941. E 7231, FO 971/27156.



On November 13, the thirteenth session of the Majlis was inaugurated by the Shāh. After the verification of deputies' credentials, Furūghī offered the traditional resignation of the Cabinet. But, before resignation, he had sought for support from the Majlis and the British Government in order to be ensured of accepting Office again. In reply to his enquiry, Bullard sent, through the emissary, this message; "... we support those who support us and that he would deserve our support if he concluded treaty and was active in co-operation with the Allies."<sup>91</sup> Having been assured of the support, Furūghī introduced his new cabinet to the Majlis on December 3, 1941.<sup>92</sup>

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91. Bullard to FO, Nov. 25, 1941, E 7758, FO 371/21756.

92. List of Furūghī's second Cabinet:

*Majid Āhī	Justice.
*Sarlashgar Amanullāh Jahanbāni	Roads and Communication
* Dr. Hasan Nafīsī (Musharaf-al-Daula)	Finance.
* Sipahbud Ahmad Agā Ahmadi (Amīrahmadi)	Interior (He was the military Governor of Tihhrān after the Occupation.)
*Sayyid Muhammad Tadayyun	Education. (chosen for his influence with the Majlis)
* Ālī Suhailī	Foreign.
* Hamid Sayyāh	Post and Telegraph.
*Sarlashgar Ahmad Nakhjavān	War.
*Bāqir Kazimī (Muhazziḅ-al-Daula)	Health.
*Abbās Qulī Gulshā'iyān	Industry & Trade.
* Ālī Akbar Hakīmī	Agriculture.
* See Personalities, Appendix I.p.494.	



#### IV. Tripartite Treaty of Alliance.

Signing treaties with big powers has, often, been a nightmare for the Iranian Government. And yet, the people have regarded, because of their endemic mistrust of government, any treaty with suspicion. They cannot be blamed for this idiosyncrasy, for they have not had pleasant memories of the treaties in the past. Perhaps, it is because procrastination<sup>93</sup> has practically, become a normative technique of Iranian diplomacy, which is used for getting better concession in return for the signing of treaties.

The Treaty of Alliance which was suggested to the Iranian Government in the early part of September 1941, took nearly five months to be signed while the British and Soviet Governments had anticipated its conclusion in October. The signing of the treaty which took place on January 29, 1942, was apparently a departure from the policy of neutrality to one of alliance." The change, however, was not so sudden as it might appear".<sup>94</sup> The policy of neutrality had failed, not because of being under attack by the Soviet and British Governments as Ramazani describes,<sup>95</sup> but, because of the obvious reason that when the country was occupied by

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93. Cf. R.K. Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973, p.48 (f.n., 11).

94. Ibid, p.45.

95. Ibid.

the Anglo-Russian troops, camped virtually outside the government office, there remained no opportunity for the Government of Iran to pursue an independent foreign policy. It was shown that the policy of neutrality was the only alternative, perhaps best at the time, to be adopted by Iran. Even when the Government showed its willingness to Britain for some kind of alliance, it did not receive a positive response, while the belligerent powers were advocating its policy of neutrality.

The apparent purpose of the treaty of alliance was for Iran to become allied with the Allies in order to facilitate the supply of war materials to the Soviet Union. But the truth might, perhaps, be sought in the age-old Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran. It could be argued that the real object of the treaty, which was initiated and drafted by the British, was to regulate the presence of the Russians in Iran during and after the war. However, the aftermath was not what the British had hoped for.

It will be examined how this, to borrow Ramazani's words, "momentous change in Iranian wartime foreign policy,"<sup>96</sup> were brought about, in Bullard's words, "under duress".<sup>97</sup>

In early September, Bullard received instructions from London to suggest to the Iranian Government a treaty of

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96. Ibid.

97. Sir.R.Bullard, "Persia in Two World Wars", Royal Central Asian Journal, 50, pt.1, 1963, p.14.

alliance with the Soviet Union and Great Britain. Bullard believed that such a suggestion would encourage the Iranians in their task of handing over the Germans.<sup>98</sup> Meanwhile, a similar suggestion had been raised independently by Sa'id in Moscow. The British Government had also communicated the idea to the Soviet Government. On September 9, Molotov informed Sir Stafford Cripps that they had accepted it in principle.<sup>99</sup> Soon after the Soviet reply, Bullard was instructed to put the idea of a treaty of alliance before Furūghī and Suhailī. When Furūghī was sounded out about the idea, he asked Bullard to keep the matter secret even from Suhailī while he thought it over. The first reaction of Furūghī, according to Bullard, was that the proposal had many attractions but that many Iranians felt that they had merely submitted to force majeure whereas if they allied themselves with the Soviet Union and Britain they would incur the vengeance of Germany if the Germans won. Moreover, Furūghī doubted that the Russians would observe the terms of such an alliance. Finally, he thought that if Riżā Shāh became allied to the two great powers would he not feel his position stronger than ever?<sup>100</sup>

Presumably, when it became apparent that Riżā Shāh would abdicate, Furūghī intimated to Bullard his approval

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98. Bullard to FO, secret No.704, Sept.10 1941. E 555 /3326 /34, L/P&S/12/3520.

99. FO to Tihirān, secret, No.681, Sept.11,1941. E 5554/3326 /34, L/P&S/3520.

100. Bullard to FO, secret, Sept.14,1941. E5678/3326/34, FO 371/27217.



of the proposed alliance and his intentions to work to that end as soon as the constitutional crisis was over.<sup>101</sup>

The first draft of the treaty was presented to the Iranian Government in late September. The draft was inadequate, and the Government had many objections to it. The Iranians were asking the British and Russians for concrete assurances about Iran's political independence and territorial integrity during and after the war, and for economic assistance. Obviously, until these legitimate demands were met, the Government had to resort to its procrastinating technique which was interpreted as "the Persians were still carefully watching the course of the war in southern Russia because Germany sympathizers still remained in official position."<sup>102</sup>

On September 27, Suhailī had asked Bullard for assurances in connection with the proposed treaty that Iran would be present at the peace conference after the war.<sup>103</sup> In reply, the Foreign Office sent this telegram to Bullard to be read to Suhailī;

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101. Bullard to FO, Sept. 16, 1941. E.520, FO 371/27218.

102. Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946, The Middle East in the war, op.cit, p.139.

103. FO, (Ref. to Bullard's No.861. Sept.27,) Oct.15, 1941 E 6827, FO 371/27235.

This demand was also made by a Majlis deputy in December 1941. See Journal de Tihhrān, 31 December, 1941.

"This Persian sacro egoismo was admirably paralleled by the demand of their delegation to the Peace Conference of 1919." Survey of International Affairs, op.cit, p.139 (fn.,3).

" Quoting article 6, para.1, of Treaty of Alliance and continuing:  
I have been authorized by my Government to give Your Excellency an assurance that the provisions of this article would apply to peace negotiations after the war, and that His Majesty's Government are of the opinion that this treaty provision ensures that Persia will be represented in any negotiations directly affecting her interests. His Majesty's Government will in any case not attempt to settle such matters without Persia's knowledge and consent."104

This declaration was followed by a confidential instruction from the Foreign Office to Bullard, emphasizing that the actual wording of assurance had to be carefully considered because:

" (1) we want to avoid giving Persia a promise that she will be represented during any peace negotiations which may take place, seeing that these may not deal with any question directly concerning Persia; and (2) we must avoid any wording which would encourage our Egyptian and Iraqi allies to clamour for an assurance that they also will be represented at the peace conference (with the main object, in the case of the Egyptians, of ventilating publicly their claims and grievances against His Majesty's Government)."105

During October, Iranian requests for amendments to the original draft of the treaty were piling up in the Foreign Office. For instance, Furūghī had asked the

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104. FO to Tihhrān, No.936, Oct.20,1941. E 6827, FO 371/27235.

105. FO to Tihhrān, No.995, Nov.7, 1941. E 710/3444/34, FO 371/27235.



British for these amendments that; (1) the Iranian Army should only be used for internal security, to which the Foreign Office agreed, perhaps because the Iranian Army was regarded as pro-German, and (2) the treaty should be one of association and not of alliance. This was not accepted.<sup>106</sup>

In early November, it seemed that patience had run out in London, and they would have to resort to the familiar but effectual method of ultimatum. So the Foreign Office instructed Bullard to make threats to the Iranian Government;

".... if they continue to try to fob us off with pretext, they will be responsible for re-occupation of Tehran which will certainly follow very soon unless they sign."<sup>107</sup>

The threat seemed to have been effective, Furūghī began to take energetic steps to secure the consent of all political parties, although progress was still slow. Meanwhile, the Soviet Government was almost reticent about the whole matter. It was in November when Bullard reached to the conclusion that the Iranian Government and people saw little need for a treaty. He wrote:

"...the public, who have not forgotten the treaty of 1919 and the bribery by which we secured it, regard the idea of a treaty with deep suspicion, especially as one of the parties is the Russians."<sup>108</sup>

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106. Bullard to FO, No.1100, Oct.5,1941. E 7265, FO 371/27235.  
 107. FO to Bullard, No.983, Nov.4,1941. E 7130/3444/34, FO 371/27235.  
 108. Bullard to FO, No.1122, Nov.11,1941. EXT.7274, E 7390/3444/34 L/P&S/12/3520.



Bullard, while citing the Foreign Office view that Iran would regard at least with equanimity the prospect of German invasion, continued;

"... but Persian opinion on the whole believes that there would be no danger of a German attack on Persia but for the presence of the allies, and a large proportion of the public would rejoice if the Germans or anyone else drove the Russians out."<sup>109</sup>

Bullard had also gathered that the Iranian Government would resign rather than accept the treaty as difficult to defend as the original draft. The resignation would certainly have been hailed as a German victory. In fact Furūghī, who was naturally hostile to the German policy, had stuck to his difficult task in spite of ill-health, in order not to give a handle to German propaganda. But it was obvious that he would eventually resign if the draft remained unchanged. His resignation might have been followed by chaos that only would delay the conclusion of the treaty. Therefore, Bullard begged the Foreign Office to examine the amendments required by the Iranian Government, and added; "it will be found that the suggested price is low."<sup>110</sup>

On December 5, the final draft of the treaty was submitted to the Iranian Government which put it before the Majlis on December 21. In the Majlis there was still

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109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

considerable resentment to the treaty. In defence of it, Furūghī rehearsed, in the Ninth Meeting of the 13th Majlis, the advantages of the treaty, and said; "bāyad inṣāf dād "(in all fairness) that the economic assistance already given to Iran had been considerable and there were more to come after the conclusion of the treaty. The opposition to the treaty was mainly launched by two Majlis deputies, viz., Dr. Musā Javān and Habibullah Naubakht.<sup>111</sup>

On December 23, the Shāh received Greenway who stressed the point that so long as the treaty was not signed the Russians would become increasingly difficult to handle. The Shāh agreed to his view. In fact the Shāh himself expressed a similar view to the American Minister in October.<sup>112</sup> The Shāh told Greenway that he had been impressing this view on all his Ministers for weeks but "unfortunately they were most lazy and moral cowards" though he was sure that they had all determined that the treaty was a good thing. The Shāh added that he would make a further effort and inform the President of the Majlis, Isfandīyārī, that a way out of the alleged constitutional difficulties must be found and the treaty signed at least before January 1942.<sup>113</sup> Greenway wrote;

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111. For the full text of this session see, Muzākerāt-i Majlis daura sizdahum 1320. For English resume cf. Ramazani, *op.cit.* pp.48-50, and Survey of International Affairs, *op.cit.* p.139.
112. Dreyfus to the SOS, No.182, Oct.9,1941. US.F.R., vol.III,1941, p.470.
113. Greenway to FO, No.1363, Dec.23,1941. E 8515/3444/34, L/P&S/12/3520.

" The attitude of His Majesty throughout these difficult weeks has been most helpful though he is not yet able to cope with such old foxes as the President of the Council (Majlis) and I should like to stress the fact that all these delays have been in spite of his efforts." 114

In December, the Iranian Government expressed its desire that Iran's position vis-à-vis the allies might be improved, were the United States to adhere to the treaty. The US Government did, however, not find itself able to fall in with this suggestion.<sup>115</sup>

The treaty was not signed before the New Year, and the debates went on throughout January. As reprisal the Foreign Office was hampering the departure of Riżā Shāh from Mauritius to South Africa in order to exert pressure on the Shāh who, in turn, might have to press his people to sign the treaty.<sup>116</sup>

In January, an incident in the Majlis in connection with the debate around the treaty, caused the breakdown of relations between the Iranian and Vichy Governments. In reply to a proposal to drop Annex II, in the Majlis on January 1st, Furūghī stated in error that the annex only required Iran to sever relations with any power with which the Allies were at war. Finding this statement incorrect

114. Ibid.

115. Dreyfus to the SOS, Nos. 260, and 261, Dec. 20, 1941.  
SOS to Dreyfus, No. 165, Dec. 29, 1941, US.F.R.,  
op.cit. pp. 476-7

116. FO to DO, Jan. 9, 1942. E 22/22/34, FO 371/31392.



the French Charge d'Affaires addressed a hysterical letter to Suhaili, declaring that the Government was acting against the wishes of the people. He also sent copies of this letter to the press. Suhaili refused to accept the letter and informed the Charge d'Affaires that he had to leave within three days as persona non grata. Subsequently, the Iranian Legation at Vichy was recalled and the Vichy Government was asked to recall its legation from Tihān.<sup>117</sup>

On January 26, 1942, the treaty was ratified by eighty votes out of ninety-two in the Majlis. January 27 and 28 being solemn Shi'a holidays, the signature took place on January 29.

After the signing of the treaty, the Soviet Ambassador, Smirnov, spoke of the defeat of German designs on Iran. He welcomed Iran among Free Nations, then he referred to the ancient friendship between Russia and Iran and quoted extracts from Stalin's speech, declaring that Soviet Russia had no ambitions of conquest nor intention to appropriate territory of others, either in Europe or Asia, or to rule over the population of other countries.<sup>118</sup>

However, the Treaty of Alliance between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union and Iran was eventually signed after lengthy debates in the Majlis and endless attempts

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117. FO summary, Jan. 15, 1942. E 331/331/34, FO 371/31393.  
 118. Bullard to FO, No. 149. Feb. 1, 1942. E 701/23/34, L/P&S/12/3520.

at procrastination and amendment by the Deputies and the Government. For convenience of reference the following very brief summary of the treaty may be given here.

Great Britain and the USSR jointly and severally undertook (article I) "to respect the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the political independence of Iran", and (article III (1) " to defend Iran by all means at their command from all aggression".... Iran undertook (article III (2)(a) to co-operate with the Allied Powers in every way possible in order that they may be able to fulfil this undertaking; and (by article III (2)(b) to give the Allies, for certain military purposes, the "unrestricted right to use, maintain, guard and, in case of military necessity, control... all the means of communication throughout Iran; to assist in obtaining material and recruiting labour, and to establish a censorship.

Article IV (1) stated that the Allied Powers could maintain in Iranian territory land, sea and air forces, but it was specifically stated that their presence did not constitute a military occupation, and would disturb as little as possible the administration and economic life of Iran.

Under article V, the Allied forces were to be withdrawn from Iranian territory not later than six months after all hostilities between the Allied Powers and Germany and her Associates had ceased.

Under Article VII, the Allied Powers undertook jointly "to use their best endeavours to safeguard the economic existence of the Iranian people against the privations and difficulties" resulting from the war.

Finally, it is, however, safe to say that both sides were disappointed with the carrying out of the treaty. The Iranian Government showed no realisation of shipping and economic difficulties in the rest of the world, and tried repeatedly to interpret article VII as binding the Allies to supply huge quantities of lorries, motor tyres, spare parts, cereals and other commodities. The Allies, on their part, complained that they met with very little co-operation from the Iranian Government and authorities, who were busy with intrigues amongst themselves, and made practically no effort to meet the grave internal difficulties resulting from the war, and demanded the Allies' aid at every turn. On numerous occasions the Allies were unable to get even their most essential military requirements without the application of the strongest diplomatic pressure and several times, virtual threats of force. The actual death of the treaty was conspicuous from the outset of the USSR's defiant attitude to article I.<sup>119</sup>

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119. For the full text of the Treaty see Appendix II, p. 553.



CHAPTER FIVE1942: The period of crisesI. The Cabinet Crisis

In spite of the signature of the Tripartite Treaty, Iran's relations with the other parties, Britain and the Soviet Union, remained almost unimproved, and many requests by each side on important questions remained unmet. This was because of the "high-handed" attitudes of the British and Russians on one side, and on the other, partly Furūghī's cabinet inertia and partly the Majlis obstructive attitude in dealing with the Government.

In February 1942, the Cabinet was, once again, under attack by the Majlis. The general criticism of Furūghī's Cabinet were that it was inactive, having failed to solve the questions of security, food supplies, return of lands acquired by Rīzā Shāh, and so on; that it contained too many military-men (the Ministers of War, Interior, Roads and Communications); and too many of its members had held Office under the former regime, and could be regarded as Rīzā Shāh's men

Furūghī was personally popular because he had never sought office, had been in disgrace with Rīzā Shāh for the last years of the old regime, and was admitted by all to be completely honest - a phenomenon almost as rare in

Iran as a two-headed calf, and attracting as much attention. Much opposition, however, gradually collected against him, some of it fictitious and malevolent, but some of it well founded. Therefore, he was under pressure by the Majlis to form a new Cabinet, though he had expressed his desire to resign in early February and thought of Taqīzāda as a suitable successor, but Taqīzāda's health was not good at the time.<sup>1</sup>

The Cabinet, which he had introduced in December 1941, was the focus of objections by both the Allies and Majlis. Furūghī had nominated Mirāt<sup>2</sup> as the Minister of Education, who was exceedingly unpopular with the more reactionary Iranians for having cleared a mosque to make room for one of Rīzā Shāh's scheme of town development, and, above all, for being identified with the policy of encouraging Iranian schoolgirls to take part in sports, including swimming in public. The clamour against him was so great that he resigned. Strong and deep religious feeling was still alive. It was not to be halted by bargains between political parties in the Majlis and it had been unaffected by change of the governing class, for its roots were among the peasants, yeomen, shopkeepers, and artisans, obscure but tenacious people.

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1. Bullard to FO, Feb. 4, 1942, E 803/24/34, FO 371/31385.  
 2. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 532.

The Minister of Agriculture, Hakīmī, was an honest but sick man, and at moments when the most ruthless efficiency was needed to encourage landowners and cultivators to use every effort to grow food-stuffs so as to reduce the dependence of the country on foreign imports, he did nothing. Eventually, Bullard pointed this out to Furūghī, who did, in fact, discard Hakīmī but only when the crisis had gone too far to be restored without a change of Prime Minister.<sup>3</sup>

The Minister of War, General Nakhjavān, was quite unable to re-establish the Army after its collapse and disgrace at the time of the Allied occupation. General Jahānbānī was supposed to be appointed to the Ministry of the Interior, but he went to the Ministry of Roads and Communications as his mild character was out of place at the former Ministry. General Aḥmadī was an active and determined soldier but very unpopular. It was feared that he might attempt to obtain despotic powers at the Ministry of the Interior. Sajjādī, the Minister of Communications in the first Cabinet, was discarded in the second, probably because of his lack of co-operation with the Allies. Dr. Nafīsī, who became Minister of Finance in the second Cabinet was the subject of most violent attacks.

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3. Bullard to FO, Confidential, March 18, 1942.  
E 2234/14/34, FO 371/313385.



He was not a man who courted popularity, and he could not escape the "double crime" of having worked for the AIOC and of reducing the rate of rial (140 rials to the pound).

Furūghī was not good at lobbying, he believed in the power of reason- a commodity in small demand among Iranians, particularly in the Majlis. When attacked he adopted a take-it or leave-it attitude, which, while it was a tribute to his disinterestedness, encouraged his critics to leave it.

The Majlis Deputies, though they continued to support Furūghī, had suddenly become conscious of their responsibility towards the nation. They seemed to think that every Minister must be approved by every Deputy. On March 4, 1942, the Majlis, at a private session, voted on the premiership in the following way:<sup>4</sup>

Furūghī	47
Qavām-al-Saltāna (Qavam)	39
Tadayyun	5
Suhailī	4

Later on, about seventy Deputies declared that they would support Furūghī in the formation of a Cabinet, but the Majlis then selected by lot a committee of fourteen to advise him on the formation of his Cabinet, and, as it included an even larger proportion of his opponents than the Majlis itself, he was naturally unable to come to an

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4. "Iran", 13 Isfand, 1320 (March 4, 1942).

agreement with them, and resigned on March 8. He was then appointed the Minister of Court - a position well suited to his education and character. A few months later, he died on November 25.

Furūghī's resignation created a period of great confusion. The Deputies were looking rather uneasily at the situation they had made. In the meantime, the newspapers and the public were realizing that, unless the Government could enjoy some freedom to carry out its work, the situation would be hopeless. Generally speaking, the opposition in the Majlis had little or no "vocation" for achieving national interests, and they took up much time wrangling with the Government and among themselves over trivial matters.

In view of the vote taken on March 4, it seemed probable that Qavām might be called upon by the Shāh to form a Cabinet. He apparently had the support of the Soviet Ambassador and the American Minister. The British Minister's view seemed to be different from his counterparts, because Qavām was suspected of having been connected with the newspaper "Iqdām"<sup>5</sup>, which had published a rather contemptuous article on the Tripartite Treaty a few days after its signing.

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5. For more details about this newspaper, see L.P.Elwell-Sutton, "The Iranian Press, 1941-1947", Iran Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, p.78, vol.VI, 1968.

It was believed that Ahmad Vusūq (Qavam's brother) subsidised this paper. See, Bullard to FO, Feb.4, 1942. E 803/14/34, FO 371/31385.

Qavām, however, denied all connection with the article in the "Iqdām".<sup>6</sup> There were other candidates for the premiership such as Ḥusain 'Alā,<sup>7</sup> the president of Bank Milli, who did not come forward; Vuṣūq, who seemed ambitious but he did not have a good following; Sayyīd Žiā, who did not seem to be enthusiastic to return to Iran; Suhailī, and Tadayyun who was disliked by the Soviet Ambassador because of the suppression of a newspaper when he was the Minister of Education, which Smirnov considered "anti-fascist". Also, Dreyfus regarded him as reactionary.<sup>8</sup> It was true that he was accused of being reactionary, but after the sweeping campaign of modernization under Rīzā Shāh a certain reaction was probably as inevitable in Iran as was the reaction in England in 1660. In the Majlis, he had shown himself strong and able to make himself respected, and while at the Ministry of Education he got rid of a considerable number of senior employees who had been occupying positions for which they were unfitted. In the Cabinet, he shared the views of the Cabinet in general, and continued the Rīzā Shāh policy of preventing any religious excesses in public during the month of Murharram.

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6. Interview with Qavām by A.C. Trott, the Oriental Secretary, British Legation, Tihraṇ, March 13, 1942. E 2234/14/34, FO 371/31385.

7. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 524.

8. Dreyfus to SOS, March 13, 1942, US F.R., vol. IV, 1942, p. 227.



However, Qavām withdrew his candidature. According to him, his withdrawal was at the request of the Shāh who asked Qavām to lend his support to Suhailī and to encourage Deputies to vote for him.<sup>9</sup> Whether or not Qavām recommended Deputies to vote for Suhailī is not certain, but it seemed that Suhailī's election was not secured without considerable pressure. There was legitimate pressure from certain classes of the public, particularly the "bāzārīs", who merely wanted to see in power a Government which would be more active than that of Furūghī. Also, Bullard reported that there was a rumour with some credibility that the police had canvassed Deputies on Suhailī's behalf, saying the he was the Shāh's candidate and that they had better vote for him.<sup>10</sup> On March 7, the Majlis, at a secret session, gave Suhailī a majority of 105 to 2 votes. Two days later, he presented his Cabinet to the Majlis, which was composed, on the whole, of as decent as possible a body of Iranians.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Interview with Qavām, op.cit. In the interview, Qavām gives an interesting account of this Cabinet crisis.

10. Bullard to FO, Confidential, March 18, 1942. Op.cit.

11. "Iran", 17 & 19 Isfand, 1320 (8 & 10 March 1942).  
List of Suhailī's Cabinet Ministers.

Suhailī, Prime Minister & Minister of Interior.

*Majid Āhī	Justice
* Ali Asghar Hikmat	Health
** Mahmūd Badīr	Finance
*Sarlashgar Jahānbāni	War
*Muṣṭafa 'Adl	Education
*Yadullāh 'Azudī	Roads & Communications.
*Abdul Husain Hazhir	Trade & Industry
*Husain 'Adl	Agriculture
*Fāzlullā Bahrāmī	Post & Telegs.

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- \* See Personalities, Appendix I. 494.  
Sa'id was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but pending his arrival from Moscow, Suhaili was the Acting Minister of the Ministry.
- \*\* On the introduction of Badir to the Cabinet, Bullard wrote, " I was rather apprehensive when I heard of the impending appointment of Mr. Badir as Minister of Finance, since he was closely identified in Riza Shah's time with negotiations with the Germans and has been said to be pro-German; but after careful consideration, and consultation with the general manager of Imperial Bank of Iran, I decided not to object to his appointment, on the ground that a clever man who understood finance might be more useful to us in the matter of the rial rate, the increase in the note circulation etc., than an acknowledged partisan of the British, especially one not able to argue the point with knowledge. It was decided to watch his work and to object at the first sign of anti-British or even unhelpful conduct."  
Bullard to FO, March 18.1942. op.cit.

In his pronouncement of Government policies, Suhailī said that Iran's foreign policy would be to co-operate with the Governments to which Iran's interest was linked and to observe the treaties to which Iran was a partner. On the whole, his programme was a catalogue of good intentions: laws were to be revised: the army strengthened: the budget balanced, and food supplies secured. Notwithstanding, the failure to fulfil the latter was the cause of his downfall.

Interestingly, there was a change of attitude by the Soviet Government whose Ambassador in Tihṙān had supported Qavām during the Cabinet crisis, but, after Suhailī's appointment to premiership, the Soviet Ambassador in London talked of support for Suhailī;

"We should support Suhaili and not sponsor Qavam or the Tudeh party, who might be intriguing him (sic.)".<sup>12</sup>

Why there seemed to be such a dichotomy in the Soviet policy is not known. But it is certain that the Soviet Ambassador in Tihṙān had gained assurances from Qavām, on several occasions,<sup>13</sup> that Qavām would render his help at the right moment. And it was also certain that Suhailī's Government could not survive long. In fact nobody had such a hope. Knowing this, the Soviet Government probably wished

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12. FO to Tihṙān; March 13, 1942, No.346 E 1530/14/34, FO 371/31385.

13. Bullard to FO, March 7, 1942, No.301. Ibid.



to pretend disassociation with Qavām. It will later be discussed why Qavām did not wish to take the post at once.

The Foreign Office, though aware of Suhailī's vulnerability, seemed to have fewer objections to his appointment;

"....if Soheily is successful in forming a cabinet the best that could be said is that it will give us a little more time to look round for possible candidates. The chances of a complete breakdown in parliamentary government in Persia do not seem negligible, and we very soon have to ask Sir Bullard what he considers the practicable alternative."<sup>14</sup>

## II. The April Crisis and Rupture of Relations with Japan

After less than a month in office, Suhailī's Cabinet was confronted with a crisis in its foreign policy. Despite the closure of the other Axis Legations in Tihhrān in September 1941, the Japanese Legation was still open in early April 1942, and in the British and Russian notes of September 5, 1941 to the Iranian Government, the closure of the Japanese Legation had not been requested.<sup>15</sup>

Many of the difficulties which the Allies experienced in Iran were traceable to the activities of the Japanese Legation who were actively distributing German propaganda and also money among the pro-Axis Iranians. Therefore, the

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14. Minute on Bullard's No.301. Ibid.

15. See Chapter 4, p.115.

relations between Iran and Japan became one of the Allies' primary objectives on which progress in every other sphere seemed to depend.

The first representation to the Iranian Government was made by Bullard in early January. He suggested to the Government "the desirability of effecting withdrawal of the Japanese Legation in Tehran."<sup>16</sup> The Tripartite Treaty could not be quoted in support of the representation, owing to the fact that Japan was still in diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. It was, however, urged upon the Iranian Government that the closing of the Japanese Legation could reasonably be expected as an earnest of goodwill amongst the Allies; that it would not harm Iranian interests in Japan or vice versa, both of which, to all practical intents and purposes, were non-existent; that the continued presence of the Legation in Tih̄rān could serve no useful purpose, as all bag and cypher communication facilities had been denied to them and that the Japanese Legation was, in fact, nothing more than a centre from which military intelligence reports were sent to the Axis - they were known to have had a secret wireless transmitter.<sup>17</sup>

The first representation, in January, did not result in any measures being taken by Furūghī's Cabinet to sever

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16. Dreyfus to SOS, Jan.13,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942, p.325.

17. Bullard to FO, Confidential, Annual Report for 1942. March 26,1943. E 2450/239/34, FO 371/35117.

relations with Japan. Furūghī was non-committal, and his Foreign Minister, Suhailī seemed to be reluctant to put the case to the Majlis. In fact, the Furūghī Cabinet had discussed the matter but failed to take action because of the confused internal political situation, similar to, for instance, the Egyptian Cabinet which had failed to expel the French Legation.

In spite of repeated representations made by Bullard, no progress was made with this question for about three months. Meanwhile, the Foreign Office asked the State Department to take parallel actions in Tihhrān, which might persuade the Iranian Government to expel the Japanese. Dreyfus was then instructed to talk to the Prime Minister, Suhailī, on the line that "the presence of these officials is a grave danger not only to the interests of the United States and its associates in the war against aggression but also to Iran itself".<sup>18</sup> The British Legation was also repeatedly communicating to the Iranian authorities evidence collected from secret and other sources to prove that the Japanese Legation were indulging in undiplomatic and subversive activities. Finally, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, and the Shāh were warned in categorical terms that the situation would seriously deteriorate unless early satisfaction were given.<sup>19</sup>

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18. The Acting Secretary of State (Welles) to Dreyfus, March 6, 1942. US.F.R., vol. IV., 1942, p. 326.

19. Bullard to Eden, March 26, 1943. op.cit.



As a result of this pressure, on March 29, the Iranian Cabinet agreed to expel the Japanese, but the Majlis at the secret session of April 2 refused to sanction the Cabinet's decision.

Several reasons could be found for the Deputies' refusal to agree to the expulsion of the Japanese. Firstly, there was widespread dissatisfaction in the Majlis with the manner in which the Soviet Union and Britain were carrying out the Treaty; Russians were taking cattle, Poles were being dumped in Iran, the British were failing to provide food. Secondly, Deputies might probably have thought in terms of a quid pro quo and wanted to be assured that tangible aid to Iran would be forthcoming. Obviously, Suhailī had failed to assure them of the grant of Lend-Lease facilities to Iran. Finally, the Japanese had managed to obtain some support among the Deputies, and most likely the Allies' defeats in the South Pacific in the spring might have made the Deputies feel that the Japanese and Germans would soon be in Iran. Moreover, the Deputies might have been influenced by Qavām and his machinations against the Allies and his relations with the Japanese Legation, which will be discussed in the next chapter. However, when the news of the Majlis refusal reached the American Minister he wrote:

"In view of growing pro-Axis attitude of Iranians and their refusal to cooperate with British (see my number 97, April 6) tendencies which are now climaxed by refusal to expel Japanese Legation,

we should, I feel take a strong line and refuse to furnish advisers or economic assistance on Lend-Lease or any other basis until Iran shows more inclination to cooperate".<sup>20</sup>

At this juncture, the patience of the British Government seemed to be exhausted. They decided to concentrate troops outside Tih̄rān and to occupy the capital if necessary and enforce the closing of the Japanese Legation. The Soviet Government was informed of the decision and told that the British would welcome it if the Soviet Government wished to be associated in the re-occupation of Tih̄rān. The Iranian Government, however, sensing, no doubt, that the British Government had taken a decision to take forceful action, finally gave up the unequal struggle. On April 8, the Majlis, at a secret session, approved expulsion of the Japanese but with the proviso that the consent of the Soviet Government be obtained. This rather unnecessary injection of the "Soviet Union consent" into the picture was apparently either the familiar norm of Iranian diplomacy-procrastination, or the last policy of reinsurance with the Axis Powers. However, the Soviet Ambassador first refused to make formal commitment, but later his Government agreed to inform the Iranian Government that they had no objection to their breaking off relations with Japan.

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20. Dreyfus to SOS, April 7, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942 p.329.

On April 12, Suhailī told the Japanese Minister to leave Iran with his staff in one week. The Legation, eventually, left Tihhrān on April 23, via Russia, whereas the Japanese had asked to proceed to Turkey to which the Iranian Government had no objection, but the British did not approve of dumping further Axis diplomats in Turkey and insisted that the Legation had to return to Japan via Russia.<sup>21</sup>

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21. Dreyfus to SOS, April 13, 1942. Ibid, p.333



### III. The Food and Currency Crisis

#### I

The conditions imposed by the war and occupation, the lack of sufficient communications between towns and villages, general insecurity, decline of exports and imports, increase of demand for food and basic essentials, partly as a result of the presence of the foreign troops, hoarding, and smuggling of wheat to Iraq and Turkey, altogether had created an organic food crisis throughout the country. Remote parts of the country often suffered from famine, while bread riots were prevalent in major towns.

The Suhailī Government was unable to cope with this crisis, mainly because of many contradictions within the Cabinet, and the incessant struggle with the Majlis to win over Deputies' obstructiveness. Therefore, this infighting had been reflected inside the Government in general to make it an inert apparatus, incapable of dealing with the country's economic, social and political problems. Besides, numerous demands on behalf of the Allies, and agitation by feckless newspapers, *pari passu*, had aggravated the situation. For instance, a pro-Tūda Party paper, *Faryād* <sup>22</sup>, in connection

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22. For details about this paper, see L.P.Elweel-Sutton The Iranian Press". op.cit., p.94

with the Tabrīz bread riot, wrote ".... starvation does stimulate human nature to strive for food, and the hungry stomach does not fear to be confronted with swords and bayonets.... women and children, young and old, naked and hungry were crying: we are hungry, we have not been given bread, we don't want to die, we want bread...."<sup>23</sup>

To tackle the press "problem", Suhailī introduced a Press Bill, but he eventually gave in to the general clamour against the unpopular Bill which would severely limit the freedom of the Tihṙān newspaper writers.

To deal with the Majlis unsatisfactory behaviour Suhailī could do little. He once hinted to the Deputies that they had better behave if they did not wish to lose their jobs. He certainly implied that he would dissolve the Majlis. But he could not actually furnish a pretext to do so, and most likely he wished to use it as a screen whenever he wished.

The idea of the dissolution of the Majlis had been welcomed by the parties concerned. The Shāh supported the idea, probably thinking of getting rid of the Deputies of the old establishment who were attacking his father's regime and were not easily influenced by the Shāh. Moreover, he probably thought that he could exert influence upon the new election since he had gradually built up strength and

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23. "Faryād", No. 21, 22 Tir, 1322 (June 11, 1943). The article appeared a few months after the riot had taken place.

and prestige in general, and particularly among young officers in the Army. But he and his Government did not wish to dissolve the Majlis on the grounds that it had been elected on the questionable basis of 1941 which Bullard had proposed. Obviously, the Shāh would not be willing to mention the invalidity of the election as reflecting on his father. The Government, though dissatisfied with the Majlis, probably, thought that it would be better if protests were to be voiced in the Majlis rather than in the street.

On the foreign side, the United States preferred to remain neutral on the matter. It seemed ironic to the US Government to support the idea of dissolution of the Majlis while it was the advocate of the Parliamentary system and the haven of democracy. The Russians simply considered that the time was not opportune to dissolve the Majlis. Bullard was the staunch advocate of the dissolution. He wrote;

"It is doubtful if Soheily will ever be able to manage the Majlis...I think therefore that we should make one more effort to secure Taqizade as Prime Minister.

2. As you know Majlis was nominated by the late Shah and enjoys no prestige while invalidity of its title probably induces it to be more nationalistic than a properly elected assembly.



No one but deputies themselves would regret dissolution which could be justified about Furughi cabinet and especially ( a popular point) by its slowness to deal with urgent bills such as those about hoarding and late Shah's lands.....It could be stated that new elections would be held but we could leave it to Taqizade not to hasten issue of writs". 24.

To dissolve the Majlis upon Bullard's suggestion - the invalidity of the election of 1941 - would have, no doubt, been a faux pas, since this argument would have thrown doubts on the validity of decisions taken by the Majlis, including the ratification of the Tripartite Treaty. The Foreign Office, however, commented;

"It really looks as though the present Majlis will have to be dissolved unless we are prepared to put up with complete chaos. Sir R.Bullard's suggestion that its dissolution should be followed by an announcement that new elections will be held without specifying the date is ingenious and might work. The chief objection to fresh election is that they would probably result in the election of a large number of communist deputies for the northern provinces. But communist deputies could scarcely be more mischievous than the present gang and anyhow the Constitution provides for the election of so many members from Tehran itself that the Russian nominees could not secure a majority. There is of course no guarantee that a new Majlis would be an improvement on the present one but the members would at any rate realize that they were liable to be sent packing, like their predecessors, if they misbehaved".25

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24. Bullard to FO, No.512, April 21, 1942. E 2493/14/34, FO 371/31385. Taqizāda was the Iranian Minister in London. He had twice refused to return to Tihṛān. The Foreign Office preferred that the next approach to him should come from the Iranian side, viz.the Shāh. See, FO to Tihṛān, April 28, 1942. Ibid.
25. Minute by Pink on Bullard, Ibid,

In another dispatch, Bullard requested the Foreign Office for permission to secure the dissolution of the Majlis in case the military situation in India or in the West were to become difficult for the Allies in the summer of 1942, and the Majlis, therefore, might have become a serious embarrassment.<sup>26</sup> The Foreign Office, then, instructed him;

".... you should not commit yourself to any use of force to secure dissolution without further reference to me". 27

Notwithstanding, the talk of the dissolution of the Majlis remained in the air during Suhailī's administration, and it was, again, considered once Qavām became Prime Minister. Meanwhile, Suhailī still had to cope with the food situation. The general uncertainty and uneasiness of the general public concerning the food supply was reflected in a series of anti-Government intrigues in the Majlis.

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26. Bullard to FO, May, 21. 1942. E 3234/14/34, FO 371/31385  
 27. FO to Bullard, May 27, 1942. Ibid.

## II

The 'problem' of wheat supply may be sought in the agriculture policy of Rīzā Shāh's regime. The policy was to buy wheat at a low price from the cultivators, in order to ensure cheap bread and thus prevent discontent in the towns. While the landowners secured a low price for their wheat, they compensated themselves by fleecing the peasants and were not much worse off. Nobody cared what the peasants felt about it. As they were completely unorganized politically, the Government could afford to disregard their views.

When the war broke out, the price of wheat in Iran was still less than £8 per ton, which was the pre-war world price, whereas immediately after the outbreak of hostilities the price almost doubled. For instance, the British farmer obtained £16 per ton for his wheat. This was, of course, an artificially high price, designed to compensate him for high wages and the loss of cultivating a good deal of land which was not particularly suitable for corn crops. Comparatively, the prices in Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, and particularly in Syria were grossly inflated.

Already in the winter of 1940 and the following spring there was a wheat shortage which, although relieved by imports from India, left Iran with no reserves. The entry of Anglo-Russian troops just when the 1941 harvest operations were in full swing led to the collapse of the Government authority, especially in the major producing areas of the



south and north. Consequently, the Government failed to collect the normal share of the wheat crop which it had usually relied upon for the feeding of the capital and principal towns. Stocks were pillaged and either eaten or hidden by peasants, while the rich clung to what they might require and speculated with what they did not.

Those near the western borders took advantage of the high prices in Turkey and Iraq to smuggle their gains and any other surplus grain they might have across the border.

The Iranian Government seemed to be reluctant to raise the price to tackle the problem of hoarding, which would have effects on the future policy and on the economic life of the country as a whole. Later, the Government was, however, urged to raise the price to a level of £12 (1500 Rls.) a ton. But the black market price had already risen considerably beyond this figure and the concession seemed to be too late.

Two anti-hoarding laws were passed by the Majlis during the Suhailī and Qavām premierships in the spring and summer of 1942, the second of which virtually gave the Government full powers to deal with hoarders. But, by no means, however, were measures taken to execute the laws. The Government seemed unwilling to force landowners to sell at the official price or to pay them the price they demanded. Nor was the Government able to prevent smuggling into Iraq. Moreover, it was prevented by the Russians of transferring the wheat surplus from Āzarbāyījān and Khurāsān. Therefore, in the spring of 1942, a sudden fear

came over the public and the Government as to whether there would not shortly be another famine as in the last war. Consequently, the Iranian Government requested the imports of supplies of wheat and cereals and made representations both in London and Washington over the subject. In April, the dispute over the wheat supply between the Iranian and British Governments was brought to the surface. The Suhaili Government alleged that the British had promised to import 8000 tons of wheat on a monthly basis whereas only about 6000 tons were received. The British expressed annoyance that the Iranians would prefer seamen to endanger their lives to ship wheat to Iran rather than take steps to combat hoarding. Moreover, the British stated that they had supplied Iran with 40,000 tons since the occupation mostly from India, and that they were sending 3000 tons monthly to East Iran from India.<sup>28</sup>

The British and Iranians had not agreed on minimum requirements of wheat. While the latter insisted on 60,000 tons up to the end of July 1942, of which 20,000 immediately, and a further 100,000 tons from July 1942 to July 1943, the British believed that the April consignment of 1700 (half of it for the Polish army in Iran) plus whatever could be sent in May together with other Iranian

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28. Dreyfus to SOS, April 6, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942, p.122.

purchases of 7000 from the Russians and 10,000 from the United States, should be enough until the new crop came in.

The dispute continued to remain unsettled, and relations between the two Governments deteriorated. The British, no doubt, used the question of the supply of essential goods such as tyres, wheat, etc., as a weapon to obtain more co-operation from the Iranians, particularly in the dispute over the issue of currency and exchange control. Both disputes were inter-twined, each side using them to bring pressure to bear on the other.

In March, there was talk of the re-valuation of the rial against foreign currencies. Economically, there were ample grounds for the re-valuation: (a) large Allies war expenditure in Iran totalling about 400,000,000 rials monthly, sterling sales by the British at the rate of a million pounds per month; (b) the inability of Iran to dispose of her foreign exchange because of the lack of importation facilities. These two factors had created naturally a tendency to raise the value of the rial. Politically, the re-valuation was supported by the Majlis, owing to pressure from the merchants and press.

The British Government viewed re-valuation as an attempt unfavourable to its interests and instructed Bullard to inform the Iranian Government that such an attempt would affect their attitude in the matter of food supply. At the same time, the US Government was requested to support the British Minister in Tihhrān in resisting the re-valuation



of the rial. When the British demand was reported to Tihhrān, Dreyfus duly wrote;

" Any effort to prevent revaluation would undoubtedly and with some reason be resented by Iranian officials as unnecessary and unjustified interference in their internal affairs in a matter not essential to our war effort and would contribute little toward transforming Iran from a "passive appendage" into a willing partner". 29

Avoiding involvement in the dispute, the US Government decided, while supporting the British Minister in Tihhrān, not to join with the British in representations to the Iranian Government.<sup>30</sup> This decision was probably taken for two reasons; first, to maintain the US prestige in Iran intact; second, not to drive the Iranians further into the Axis hands.

The British representation only aggravated the situation. For it appeared that the Iranian Government were refusing to accept sterling balances and demanding either that more goods or gold be delivered to them or that sterling should be devalued in exchange for rial. They went so far as to refuse to give rials in exchange for sterling at the rate of 140 Rls., which had been fixed by Dr. Musharraf Nafīsī thus creating problems for British transactions in the country.

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29. Dreyfus to SOS, No.82, March 28, 1942, Ibid, p.301.

30. Memorandum of conversation by the Adviser on Political Relations (Murray), April 20, 1942. Ibid, pp.304-6.

The British Government was opposed both to the sending of gold and any devaluation of sterling against rial. As to the sending of more goods, they were prevented by shipping difficulties. Moreover, the British argued that if Iranian demands were to be met, it would set an undesirable precedent for other Middle Eastern countries".<sup>31</sup> Thus, the British again asked their American ally that they would appreciate Anglo-American co-operation in exerting pressure on the Iranians, postponing the US Lend-Lease aid for Iran and threatening to freeze the Iranian balances in the United States.<sup>32</sup>

The US Government viewed the British suggestions to be, economically, ineffective, although they might have been practicable on political grounds, for the amount of Iranian funds in the US was very small, and a threat to withhold aids under Lend-Lease from the Iranians would have hardly been an impressive weapon while no such aid had been granted yet. Furthermore, the State Department commented, "if we decided to send goods to Iran under Lend-Lease it would be for our specific advantage..."<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, the State Department saw no unreasonable behaviour on behalf of the Iranians. Reasonably, the Iranian Government did not wish to build up further blocked sterling

31. The Chargé in UK (Mathews) to SOS, April 8, 1942, US F.R., vol.IV, 1942, p.302.

32. Ibid.

33. Memo by Murray, April 20, 1942, Ibid, p.304.



balances. But they were ready to sell rials for gold or dollars. So, it was decided to increase the British supply of dollars so that they would be able to pay in dollars for the Iranian currency. The Foreign Office, while agreeing to this arrangement, felt for reasons of prestige that, " it would be preferable if the actual purchase of rials could be made by the United States rather than by the British"<sup>34</sup>, and then be turned over to them.

In late April, the British adopted a more conciliatory attitude in connection with negotiations over the supply of rial by the Iranians. The modification of their attitude was probably as a result of the US offer to buy rials for the British and also their unwillingness to join with Britain to put pressure on Iran. However, the British were now willing to send some gold to Iran, guarantee the Iranian balances in sterling with gold, and convert Iranian sterling reserves into dollars to the extent needed for Iranian imports.

The negotiations were carried out between the Iranian Government and the British Legation in Tihhrān until May 3, when an informal agreement was reached on these lines;

- "(1) Iranians to guarantee supply of rials to be issued against sterling holdings,
- (2) British to convert sterling into gold to meet Iranian dollar imports,
- (3) British to convert 35% of remaining Iranian sterling holdings to gold.
- (4) Exchange rate to be fixed at 32 rials per dollar and 128 per pound".<sup>35</sup>.

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34. Meeting with Hayter and Bewley from British Embassy and Treasury. Memo by Division of Near Eastern Affairs, April 27, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942, p.306.

35. Dreyfus to SOS, May 3, 1942. Ibid, p.310.



The informal agreement was the basis on which the Financial Agreement of May 26, 1942, was signed between Iran and Britain. According to this agreement the Government of Iran would fix the official rate of exchange as 128 rial to a pound (Article 6-a-), and would receive gold or goods equal to 40% of its balances of foreign currencies on a six-monthly basis. The remainder (60%) would remain in the Bank of England until the end of the war. The gold would only be delivered in Ottawa or South Africa, and only be spent in the Sterling Area until the war finished.<sup>36</sup>

In fact the Iranian Government undertook to fix the rate of exchange far above the real one, had it been allowed to float freely, while it did not obtain assurances with regard to the food supply. In July, the wheat situation became very critical, causing a shortage of bread. The British Legation had maintained a rather intransigent attitude, not agreeing to import wheat more than 60,000

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36. The agreement was composed of fifteen articles and an annex. It was presented to the Majlis on June 9, 1942. The Majlis did not seem to be willing to ratify it. It was however believed that the Government was implementing it even before the Majlis ratification. This had caused bitter feelings among the Deputies. A similar financial agreement was concluded between Iran and the Soviet Union on March 18, 1943. It was ratified by the Majlis on May 29, 1943, according to which the Soviet Union were to pay in dollars for the rial purchases. But the balance of dollars was to remain in the Soviet Union in the form of gold until the expiry of the agreement.

tons for the year 1942, and insisting that the Government should requisition stocks alleged to be in the hands of hoarders before demanding more imports. The British were so obsessed with the problem of hoarding as to ignore the underlying reality of the situation which was simply a lack of sufficient wheat in the country. The American Minister reported;

"Iranian views as to hoarding has been proved substantially correct by recent investigations which failed to reveal large stocks in hands of persons designated by British."<sup>37</sup>

In the middle of July the gravity of the situation was, however, realized by the British. Although the Suhailī Government had frequently brought to the Allies' attention the need for more wheat imports up to 100,000 tons from July 1942 to July 1943, they had ignored it. The Russians had allowed only small quantities of the surplus cereal in their occupied zone to go to the south and east of the country, while they were taking cattle and horses into the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, bread riots began in Burūjird and Malāyir, and it was feared that they might spread throughout the country. The British recognized the seriousness of the situation, and promised to lend the Government 5600 tons of wheat from military stocks to be repaid by wheat

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37. Dreyfus to SOS, July 7, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942 p.143.

38. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, July 28, 1942. E 4619/3655/34, FO 371/31443

bought from the United States by Iran. Also five thousand tons of barley were to be given to be mixed with wheat for bread. These measures would help the Government until the new crop was harvested during July and August, but they were taken too late to prevent the Suhailī Government from falling.



## III

From early July opposition to Suhailī began to grow stronger. He became the object of attack by the Majlis, many of whom were anxious to obtain ministerial posts and probably felt that they were being deprived of the spoils of office. The introduction of Sayyid Mihdī Farukh,<sup>39</sup> the Governor General of Kirmān, to the Cabinet as the Minister of Interior on July 2, further aggravated Suhailī's position, and there were rumours of an interpellation which would unseat Suhailī. That, however, did not happen. But the 'Adālat Party, led by Shaikh 'Alī Dashtī and Farajullāh Bahrāmī (Dabīr A'zam), made the strongest attacks on Suhailī for his inability to solve the transport and food supply. At the same time, rumours of a dispute between Suhailī and his Minister of Justice, Āhī, concerning the latter's departure as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, helped to spread the general feeling that the Cabinet was on its last legs.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, a number of candidates for the post of Prime Minister were proposed. A group of Deputies nominated Muṣṭafā Qulī Bayāt (Sahām-al-Sultān) as their candidate, but with little success, for Bayāt had had little experience in Government office and could not command general respect.

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39. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 527.

40. The dispute between Suhailī and Āhī was mainly due to the latter's reluctance to leave the country, a fact which might be the source of rumour that he hoped himself to secure the premiership.

Another group supported 'Alī Mansūr, who was the Prime Minister at the time of the Anglo-Russian occupation in August 1941, and was then the Governor General of Khurāsān. Tadayyun was also active, but the Soviet Embassy considered him too pro-British. Therefore, there was little hope for his success. Kāzimī was also on the prowl. Some Tihṛān politicians were talking of Sayyid Ziyā-al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī as the one person who could save the country from its ills.<sup>41</sup> Finally, Qavām was perhaps the most serious candidate who had also a considerable following. Moreover, the Russians appeared to regard him as strong enough to ensure a stable Government.

By the end of July, Suhailī's position had deteriorated to the extent that there was no hope for his survival. Bullard reported;

"The Cabinet is very shaky. Owing to the incompetence and corruption of local officials the bread situation is bad in many districts and there have been bread riots. ....I know no one who now expects that Soheily, who is himself considered both corrupt and afraid to act, can reform his Cabinet in such a way to be able to deal with this crisis...The general opinion seems to be that Qavam al Saltana is the only man on the spot who could hope to make some headway against the difficulties which beset the Persian Government. The Russian Ambassador would like me to join him in putting Qavam into power but I have told him that apart from the fact that my latest instructions are to put up with Soheily for the present, our policy is to accept any Government which the Persians set up provided that it will work energetically with the Allies....."

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41. He was still in 1942 in Palestine, and had shown no interest in returning to Iran. He eventually came back to Iran in 1943. See Chapter Seven.



2....The food situation and the German advance in Russia have created problems which I fear are beyond Soheily's powers and the Russian Ambassador and I have both come to the conclusion that his weakness and inactivity consitute a serious danger for the Allies."<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the Shāh sounded the well-known elder statesman, Husain Pirniyā (Mu'tamin-al-Mulk)<sup>43</sup> about forming a cabinet, but he refused on the grounds that the Majlis was obstinate and intriguing. It seemed that nobody would accept office at this difficult moment, even Qavām. But he indicated to the Oriental Secretary of the British Legation that however unattractive the prospect he would accept the Premiership if it was offered to him. Bullard wrote, " Qavam already knows that Soviet Embassy are in his favour though he declares that he has no particular relations with them".<sup>44</sup>

Failing to reform his cabinet, Suhailī resigned on July 30. In his farewell statement to the Majlis, he attributed his resignation to the lack of sympathy shown by the Deputies and press to his Government's efforts to deal with current problems. He also pointed out measures taken by his Government in domestic and foreign policies. He said;

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42. Bullard to FO, July 28, 1942. E 4485, FO 371/31385.

43. See Personalities, Appendix I, p. 513.

44. Bullard to FO, July 29, 1942. E 4494, FO 371/31385.



"Most important of all, the good understanding between Iran and her two neighbours, which was created by the Three Power Treaty, has been confirmed during this period and relations between us have been strengthened, so that we can say that there is no cause for anxiety left in this direction. Our relations with America have fortunately become relations of close co-operation and assistance of the American Government has been obtained for the engagement of civil and military advisors." 45.

Undoubtedly, certain Deputies, chief among whom were 'Alī Dashtī, Bayāt, and Dr. Malikzāda, opposed Suhailī and did their best to unseat him. The press also showed a hostile attitude towards the Government. But, the main reason for his downfall might, perhaps, be sought in his inability to deal with the food problem, and his feeling that he had lost the confidence both of the British and Russians.

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45. Summary of Statement in the Majlis by Suhailī, July 30, 1942. E 5057, FO 371/31385.

## IV

Qavam's Premiership

"We have had very considerable difficulties with Qavam-es-Saltaneh, but we can not hope for complete subservience from any man with sufficient character to govern this most intractable and venal country.."46  
(Bullard to Eden)

"Qavam-es-Saltaneh is regarded by the State Department in Washington as the type of all that is evil in Persian politics..."47

Perhaps, Pareto would have found it difficult to group Qavām into one of his categories of statesmen; foxes and lions,<sup>48</sup> as Qavām embodied the characteristics of both. This enigmatic politician of the old establishment, once a revolutionary during the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, and a big landowner in Lāhījān (near Rasht), was banished to Europe by Riżā Khān, being accused of having plotted against the life of Riżā Khān, and allowed to return to Iran in March 1929. The Foreign Office Personalities Report described him as " a clever man, but sly, intriguing and unreliable".<sup>49</sup> Regardless of his personality, he made a great impact on Iranian politics.

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46. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, Sept.22, 1942. E6154/3655/34, FO 371/31443.

47. State Department to FO, No.1168, Feb.28,1942. Cited in the minute on Bullard, July 28,1942. E 4485/14/34 FO 371/31385.

48. Vilfredo Pareto, Trattato di sociologica generale, S'2178,2480<sup>4</sup>,Barbera, Firenze,1961. (English translation, The Mind and Society, US,1935).

49. FO, Feb.7,1940. E 832/826/34, FO 371/24582. Also see, Personalities, Appendix I,p.536.

On August 1, a ballot of the Majlis gave 53 votes to Qavām against 22 to Suhailī, and the former agreed to form a Cabinet on the understanding that he was to have a completely free hand in the selection of his Ministers.<sup>50</sup>

His foreign policy was, apparently, to establish closer relations with the Allies, particularly with the United States. He even went so far as to consult the selection of his Ministers with Bullard and also cancelled several names immediately when he heard that the British did not approve of them.<sup>51</sup> But, at the same time, he had secretly maintained his contacts with the Axis camp.<sup>52</sup>

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50. Qavām introduced his Cabinet on August 9;

*Sādiq Sādiqi (Mustashar-al-Daula)	Advisor
*Ibrāhīm Hakīmī (Hakim-al-Mulk)	Advisor
*Dr. Isma'īl Marzbān	Health
*'Alī Riżā Qaraquzlū (Baha' -al-Mulk)	Justice
*Sayyid Hasan Taqīzāda	Finance
	(Rejected the post)
*Baqir Kazīmī	Interior
*Hamid Sayyāh	Post & Telegraph
*Dr. 'Alī Siyāsī	Education
*Yadulah 'Azudī	Roads & Communications
*Abdulhusain Hāzhir	Trade & Industry
*Muhammad Sā'id	Foreign
*See Personalities, Appendix I. 494.	

The Ministry of War was offered to 'Ala who preferred to retain his non-political post as the President of Bank Millī, and then to Kazīmī, who refused it as too difficult. Qavām himself was therefore looking after the Ministry. Kazīmī was then transferred to the Ministry of Finance, upon Taqīzāda's recommendation, and Javād 'Amirī was introduced as the Minister of the Interior.

51. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, August 14, 1942.  
E 5057/14/34, FO 371/31385.

52. See chapter 6.



In the domestic field, his policy was what he said to the representatives of the United Press and Associated Press in his interview on August 4. When asked what his policy would be, Qavām picked up a piece of bread from his desk and replied "This is my programme, if I can put bread of good quality in hands of all Iranians other problems will be easy to solve".<sup>53</sup>

Like his predecessor, Qavām's domestic policy was directly linked to his foreign policy where the problem of food and currency, and the "problem" of Majlis were mutually and simultaneously being used as the means of pressure and counter-poise.

With the accession of Qavām to power, the problem of the dissolution of the Majlis came, once again, to the fore. On August 5, Bullard hurriedly wrote;

"I am confident Majlis constitutes serious danger. In case of immediate threat from North, deputies might e.g. make nationalistic declaration and perhaps cancel their ratification of Treaty. Soviet Ambassador agrees generally and promised to ask his Government not to oppose dissolution..."<sup>54</sup>

According to Bullard, Qavām had also expressed his desire to dissolve the Majlis. He made it clear that "he did not intend to stand any nonsense from Majlis".<sup>55</sup>

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53. Dreyfus to SOS, August 5, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942 p.151.

54. Bullard to FO, August 5, 1942. E 4636/14/34, FO 371 /31385.

55. Bullard to FO, August 15, 1942 E 4827/14/34, FO 371 /31385.

But, at the same time, Qavām's chief bargaining counter against the Allies was his threat to resign, if they did not help him to overcome the other problem, viz., the food supply. The Foreign Office was obviously not at ease with Qavām, since he had such a strong intriguing personality that it was extremely difficult for them to handle. But, he was, half-heartedly, being supported by the Foreign Office or Bullard to be probably used against the Majlis. A recommendation of the Foreign Office was this;

"With the Majlis gone, we need pay little attention to Qavam's threat to resign, since we should have far less difficulty in replacing him if he went. He would have to be correspondingly more amenable if he wished to keep his job."<sup>56</sup>

But Qavām was able enough at handling both the British and the Majlis. While confiding his desire of dissolving the Majlis to the British, he affirmed publicly on September 27 his respect for the constitution and rights of the Majlis.

Talks on the dissolution of the Majlis were, however, carried out between the British and Qavām. Meanwhile, the Soviet Government agreed to the dissolution but thought that the time and manner of it should be settled locally.<sup>57</sup>

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56. Minute by Young on Bullard, Ibid.

57. FO.to Bullard, November 8, 1942. E 6536/122/34, FO 371/31386.

But the problem of finding convincing grounds to dissolve the Majlis was an obstacle. According to Article 49 of the Fundamental Law of December 30, 1906, the new Deputies had to be elected three months after dissolution (one month in Tih<sup>r</sup>ān) While the British had desired the indefinite postponement of the election, there was a serious danger that it might have destroyed the original British aim; the dissolution. The Iranian Government might take the line that it could not conclude any binding agreement because it would not be constitutionally valid without the approval of the Majlis. This is exactly what happened in 1920-22, when the Majlis was in abeyance and the Government of the day used this argument to great effect as an excuse for delaying decisions. The result was that the British Legation devoutly wished that the Majlis was in existence so as to remove this excuse for delaying decisions on urgent questions.

The other side of the analysis would have been if the Government had held fresh elections within the interval laid down by the constitution. Qavām was capable of rigging the elections and could have sent his own nominees to the Majlis. The Shāh would undoubtedly have compromised with it. Also having the Majlis on his side, Qavām would have been in a stronger position to bargain with the Allies. Moreover, the closing down of the democratic assembly of an ally at the instigation of the "Democracies" would be a gift to Axis propagandists, while the embittered ex-Deputies would



do their utmost to agitate and intrigue against the Allies. Therefore, in the analysis, either way the Allies stood, would lose.

However, talk of dissolution once more remained in the air without effective steps being taken to that end. Although Qavām seemed to be anxious to dissolve the Majlis, he was not willing to do so. Perhaps he wished to use the Majlis as a screen between the Government and the Allies. Thus the desire of the British Legation to see the "obstructive" assembly dissolved never came to fruition.

The remedy supply was given to the Government in July, but did not last long enough to avert serious shortages of wheat. Immediately after Qavām's succession in August, the American Legation reported: "Unless the wheat situation is taken seriously in hand famine with all its accompanying difficulties may soon become a reality"<sup>58</sup> In fact the signs of a famine had been visible for some time in other parts of the country if not actually in Tih̄rān, but nobody paid any attention. On August 19, 1942, the British Legation in a note to Qavām stated that the Allies had fulfilled their obligation by providing Iran with 80,000 tons of wheat, and that Iran should take energetic steps to collect wheat and apply hoarding laws.<sup>59</sup>

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58. Dreyfus to SOS, August 5, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV 1942, p.152.

59. Dreyfus to SOS, August 26, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942, p.153.

In other words, the Legation implied that no wheat would be imported into the country, at least, for the greater part of 1943. Furthermore, the Public Relations Bureau of the Legation made a statement on the wheat situation which was published in the Tihhrān Press. The statement attributed the misunderstanding of British policy on the wheat situation to Axis propaganda and continued that the British Government had imported more than 70,000 tons of wheat into Iran since September 1941, and that the Soviet Government had sent 23,000 tons to Iran. It concluded that over a quarter of Iran's yearly wheat consumption had been imported into the country by meticulous efforts of the Allies (Iran's yearly wheat consumption was 300,000 tons).<sup>60</sup> This statement did not improve the situation, it only caused tumult in the Majlis.<sup>61</sup>

While the problem of wheat supply had remained unsettled, the Government was drafting in October a bill to issue two billion additional rials in currency ( one billion for internal needs and one billion for war needs). But the Government knew that the Majlis would not pass the bill, if nothing were offered in exchange. The crux of the situation was wheat. Meanwhile, Sheridan, the food adviser made a statement to the press in order to soften general discontent

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60. "Kaihan", 7 Shahrivar, 1321 (Au.29,1942).

61. At 87th session of the Majlis on September 20, Deputy Tihhranchi attacked the Statement and said, "only for the Poles' consumption, we have to supply a great amount of bread, butter, cheese, and other goods. The reason for the food shortage is not to say that we are corrupt." See Muzākirāt-i Majlis, दौरای سیزدهم, 1321.

with the Allies' treatment of Iran. In his statement he assured the people of supplies of wheat and of a sympathetic and helping hand from both Britain and America. The British Legation took a strong position with regard to the statement and felt that Sheridan had no right to bind them to supply wheat to Iran. The situation was aggravated by the refusal of Casey's offer by the Iranian Government. On a short visit to Tih-rān he had offered to exchange 5000 tons of wheat (half for the Government and half for the British troops) with 25000 rifles. The Iranian Government refused his offer on the grounds that the British had not paid for 100,000 rifles and 1000 machine guns bought in previous months. Casey, because of this refusal and most likely encouraged by Bullard who was opposed to the supply of wheat, told the Government that the British did not intend to supply Iran with any more wheat and said: "I know more about the shipping situation than Mr. Sheridan."<sup>62</sup>

These antagonizing statements could only drive the Iranians further into the Axis camp, and make the Government and Majlis feel that it was unnecessary to make sacrifices for the Allies when they refused to supply wheat or other goods and when they took their potatoes, vegetables and

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62. Dreyfus to SOS, Oct.17,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942 p.156.



cattle out of Iran without permission.<sup>63</sup> Obviously, the Government could not present the currency bill to the Majlis unless some assurances were given of essential goods, particularly of wheat. The American Minister feared that Qavām might resign if he did not receive any co-operation on the matter. Consequently, the currency bill would be postponed in which event the Allies' war efforts would face difficulties. Dreyfus thought that the obstinate attitude of the British towards the wheat supply was to force Qavām to resign. He wrote;

"I have impression that British Legation is playing again game of divide and rule and may be endeavouring force out Qavam and obtain more suitable Quisling. It is rumoured they favor Tadayyan for Prime Minister. At any rate British policy here seems to me to lack comprehension and vision".<sup>64</sup>.

Caught up by the gravity of the wheat supply, Dreyfus recommended that his Government should give Iran guarantees to undertake to supply the deficit of wheat, though this would have countered the British policy. The State Department, while instructing Dreyfus not to give guarantees until the matter was fully studied, informed the Foreign Office of its concern over the problem, and added: "A starving and rebellious population would, we feel, be an

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63. The Government and Majlis's claim about the Allies' behaviour was not unfounded. For instance, Bullard reported: "... The British military authorities were anxious to buy 10,000 tons (potatoes). The Persian Government, however, procrastinated about giving the necessary permits. Most of the quantity was bought by the military authorities and exported from Persia without permits." Bullard to Eden, March 26, 1943. E 2450/239/34, FO 371/35117.

64. Dreyfus to SOS, Oct. 17, 1942. Op.cit. p.157.

It is true that the British favoured Tadayyun but there is hardly any evidence to show that they wished to see Qavām out of office before the Majlis dissolved.

extremely serious obstacle".<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, in Tih̄rān, the Allies' representatives persuaded Qavām to present the currency bill to the Majlis, provided the United States and British Governments agreed to supply any cereal deficiency which might occur up to the end of the war or at least until the 1943 harvest. A joint Anglo-American declaration was then proposed along the same lines, to be announced publicly so that it would give more heart to Qavām to defend the bill in the Majlis. Then, proposal and counterproposal drafts of such a declaration which later appeared as a food agreement began circulating between Tih̄rān, London and Washington.

The Russians, who had refused to join the declaration, submitted to the Iranian Government a request to buy 5000 tons of wheat, 15000 tons of barley and 30,000 tons of rice. The direct result of this request was a further weakening of the political situation of the Allies in Iran. While it sorely needed its own wheat for internal use, the Soviet Union was pressing the Government to sell its wheat. The Iranian Government had no option but to comply with such a request, as 35000 tons of surplus wheat from Āzarbāyījān was virtually in the hands of the Russians who were making any excuse to withhold it. The Iranian Government hoped the British and Americans would raise an objection to the Russian purchases of Iranian wheat. But the Russians had made similar requests to the US and British Governments, who agreed to allow Iranian wheat to go to Russia, making up

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65. The SOS to Winant(UK), Oct.19,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV,1942 p.159.



any Iranian deficit with Anglo-American wheat. Therefore, Bullard telegraphed his Government, requesting 20,000 tons of wheat to be sent to Iran as soon as possible to meet the situation caused by the Russian purchases.

Meanwhile, the approved drafts of the food declaration reach Tihhrān from Washington and London to their respective Legations, and instructions were given to proceed with negotiations with the Iranian authorities on the basis of these drafts, in which the US and British Governments should "take all possible steps to ensure the supply of bread for the people of Persia until the gathering of the harvest in 1943".<sup>66</sup> In the Majlis, debates were going on over the currency bill, in whose favour only two Deputies spoke.

It seemed that the Government have little hope of success. The main points from the opposition speeches, other than the bread shortage which all stressed, were: that the Anglo-Iranian Financial Agreement had not yet been passed by the Majlis while the Government was executing it; that the pound exchange rate was too high and the rate should be freed and the pound allowed to find its own level, which would be much lower than the present rate; that prices rose with every increase in note issue, the people were already suffering severely from the high cost of living

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66. Winant(UK) to SOS, Oct.28,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV,1942, pp.171-2.



which previous increase in the note issue for the Allies had caused and could not stand further increase; that the Allies were bleeding the country and giving nothing in return; that the war might go on for years and constant Allied demands for the increase in the note issue would reduce the value of qiran (rail) to nothing; and that the Allies were using Iran's means of communications for their own purpose to the exclusion of the country's urgent needs; and that the Allies were stopping food supplies reaching Tih̄rān from Āzarbāyījān.<sup>67</sup> However, the Majlis ratified only five hundred million rials to be issued, and it seemed that for the remainder of two billion rials proposed in the bill, the fight between the Government and Majlis would continue.

The Deputies' resentment to ratify issuance of further rials was not unjustified. The Iranian economy was in perpetual crisis. The main cause of the crisis was the heavy Allied War expenditure which amounted to four hundred million rials monthly, The Iranian note issue increased from 1550 million rials in August 1941 to three billions in October 1942, and it continued rising.<sup>68</sup>

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67. Muzākīrāt-i Majlis daura-yisizdahum, session No.97, 28 Mihr, 1321. (Sept.20, 1942)

Among the Deputies who made fierce attacks on the Government were: Amīr Taimūr, Ālī Dashtī, and Dr. Javān. The last one resigned owing to his lack of confidence in the Government.

68. Extracted from the Bank Millī Report published in Kaihān, 13 Aban, 1321 (Nov.4, 1942)

Rials in circulation (in million)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rial</u>
Azar 1318(nov.- Dec. 1939)	1,115
" 1319( " 1940)	1,250
" 1320( " 1941)	1,850
" 1321( " 1942)	3,576
" 1322( " 1943)	6,320
" 1323( " 1944)	7,580

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Source: Bank Milli Report (see footnote No.69)

During the same time the price index rose from the base of 100 in 1937 to 193 in August 1941 and 331 in September 1942, while, for Britain and Germany, the figures, from the inception of the war until March 1943, were 25-30, and 105-106 respectively. The cost of living index for the same period was 100, 209 and 418.<sup>70</sup> This was perhaps the main cause of need for an ever larger note issue and also an effect of increased circulation. There were, of course, domestic reasons as well why the Government had to issue more notes: firstly, notes did not complete the normal cycle and return to banks for reissue, due to the lack of confidence in the

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69. H. Pirniyā, "Tasbīt-i riṯyāl", Iran, 15 Isfand, 1323, (March 6, 1945).

70. All figures extracted from the Bank Milli Report published in Dād, No.93. 17 Isfand, 1321 (March 8, 1943). Also, see, Dreyfus to SOS, Nov.18, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942.

rial which had caused people to buy goods and land rather than to place their money in banks, and secondly, because of the hoarding of notes by the lower classes and peasants who kept their notes in safes or under ground, in which case the amount was, however, not very considerable.

However, after the Majlis vote for 500 million rials, Qavām, immediately, placed 100 millions at the Allies' disposal. This amount would last for, perhaps, ten days, at which time a currency crisis would have come to the fore again. Qavām asked, therefore, for the food declaration to be announced without delay, in order to reduce political tension caused by the food riots and also to strengthen the hand of the Government in obtaining Majlis' approval of the pending currency bill. But Bullard rejected Qavām's request, saying that the declaration did not meet the situation fully, for while the British and Americans would be bound to supply wheat until the 1943 harvest, the Iranians could resort to "blackmail" when the two billion rials were to be exhausted within a few months.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, Bullard proposed to the Foreign Office the abandonment of negotiations on the basis of the approved draft, and that they should proceed along these lines: (1) the British and American Governments would undertake to insure Iran's wheat supply until the end of the

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71. Dreyfus to SOS, Oct. 30, 1942. US.F.R., vol. IV, 1942, p. 174



war and to import 25,000 tons of wheat as soon as possible, (2) the Iranian Government must remove the legal limit tonnage issue of currency and take out of the hands of the Majlis the right to restrict the note issue, and set up a currency board composed of Iranian, Russian, American, and British members.<sup>72</sup>

One might be inclined to think that these additional demands were, deliberately, designed not to be acceptable to the Iranians. Indeed, no government would accept that its currency control should be in the hands of aliens. The American Minister reported:

"It is quite possible that the British are deliberately delaying solution of food and currency problem by making additional demands and suggestions... I should not be surprised if they intend to occupy Tehran on pretext that Iranians have not lived up to agreement to furnish rials".<sup>73</sup>

In fact, Dreyfus's alarming report was not without base, as the British had designed a military plan to take over Iranian banks.<sup>74</sup> At the same time the Foreign Office requested the State Department to instruct Dreyfus to support the British Minister in his discussions with the Iranian authorities about those proposals. But the State Department's policy was different from the British one. The American view can be gauged from the following lines:

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72. Ibid.

73. Dreyfus to SOS, Nov. 4, 1942. US.F.R., vol. IV, 1942.1.176.

74. C-in-C (Persia/Iraq) to War Office, Most secret, Nov. 13, 1942. E 6703/69/34, FO 371/31407.

"we are opposed to repeated changes in the bases of negotiations in a period of crisis such as the present. We believe any action which would bring about fall of cabinet is to be avoided if possible, since we fail to see how repeated cabinet changes may be expected to bring about greater order or enhance public confidence in Government. We are even more strongly opposed to forced suppression of Majlis and constitutional procedures or military occupation of Tehran..."

6. In your discretion, you may formally urge upon Prime Minister advisability of seeking full powers from Majlis.....

However, neither these or any other measures need be considered as essential conditions precedent to issuance of wheat announcement".<sup>75</sup>

On November 17, Qavām placed a bill before the Majlis, conferring on him until August 1943 full powers in regard to specified questions of special urgency, e.g., currency, food supply, and price control. He made the mistake of asking for these powers for himself personally instead of for the Cabinet. The Majlis, who requested that the session should be secret, showed considerable hostility and Qavām did not press the bill. But the Cabinet were divided over this bill by then. Kāzimī, the Minister of Finance, who feigned illness to avoid the responsibility was dismissed.<sup>76</sup>

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75. The Secretary of State (Hull) to Dreyfus, Nov.10,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942.p.186.

76. In his statement published in Kaihān , 28 Aban, 1321 (Nov.19,1942), Kāzimī claimed that he had resigned and had not been dismissed. He said: "... though I believe that there must be found reasonable solutions for the Allies demands, I do not agree with the request from the Majlis for full powers (by Qavām), and I recognized it as pernicious to the genuine conscience and faith, I therefore resigned".  
The FO comment on Kāzimī's dismissal reads: "Kazimi is certainly no loss and may well have been working against us behind the scenes". The FO, Nov.20,1942. E 6822/14/34, FO 371/31386.



Urged on by the Allies' representatives in Tihṙān, Qavām presented another bill to the Majlis on November 19, providing for transfer to the Hai'at-i nizārat-i andūkhta-yi iskinās (Note Reserve Control Committee) of the right to control the note issue. This bill had been prepared as an alternative to solve the currency problem if the full powers bill of November 17 was not passed by the Majlis. The full powers bill was, however, not passed and referred to a Majlis committee without urgency, and the alternative bill had been agreed by Bullard and Qavām on November 18, to be put before the Majlis. Bullard wrote: " I have told him that to satisfy our currency needs the bill must be passed into law by 1.p.m. November 19". 77

The Majlis passed the currency bill in the evening of November 19. The feelings of the Majlis towards Qavām were hostile. It is clear from the tone of the debate that the Majlis were seeking to place on Qavām all responsibility for the existing evils and to set themselves up as friends and advocates of the Allies. This rather surprising change of attitude was no doubt inspired by the united front shown by the Russian, American, and British representatives, and fear of dissolution. The effect of the Allies' victories in North Africa might also have played an important role.

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77. Bullard to FO, Nov.18,1942. Ibid.



The currency bill, passed by the Majlis, was composed of five Articles:

Article 1. From the date of the ratification of this law authority for the issue of notes is vested in the Hai'at-i nizārat-i andūkhta-yi iskinās.

Article 2. The Director General of the Finance, Dr. Millspaugh will become a member of the Hai'at-i nizārat-i andūkhta-yi iskinās after his arrival.

Article 3. The terms for the issue of notes, authority for which is vested by this law in the Hai'at-i nizārat-i andūkhta-yi iskinās, will be fixed by a decree of the Hai'at-i vazīrān (Council of Ministers) acting on proposals put forward by the Hai'at-i nizārat-i andūkhta-yi iskinās.

Article 4. Notes which are issued by virtue of this law must possess the following backing: (a) As to 60% Gold at the official rate ruling in the international market at the present date and/or pounds and dollars convertible into gold. (b) As to 40% Pounds and dollars guaranteed against depreciation in terms of gold at today's rate.

Article 5. The backing for the notes to the value of three thousand five hundred million rials, authority for the issue of which has been given up till this date, will be on a basis of 60% gold and silver, valued at the international market rate and jewels which were handed over to the Bank Millī in accordance with the law of 25 Aban 1316."<sup>78</sup>

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78. H. Pirnia, "Tasbit-i riyal", op.cit. Also see Dreyfus to SOS, Nov. 20, 1942. US.F.R., vol. IV, 1942. p. 202-3

By ratifying this bill, the Majlis lost one of its important rights. But, what would have happened, had the Majlis failed to do so? The answer was in Bullard's telegram:

"In view of the urgency of the currency situation I found it necessary yesterday to authorise the British military authorities to put into operation preliminary part of military plan already worked out for seizure of note forms in the National Bank. These preliminaries involved no overt military action on our part.

2. In the light of provisions of new currency law I have today cancelled all arrangements for forcible action". 79

After receiving satisfaction on the currency question, both the British and Americans agreed to proceed with the wheat declaration. On December 4, the Food Agreement was signed in Tihhrān by Sā'id, Bullard and Dreyfus. By this agreement the British and US Governments undertook to ensure, "within the full limit of their powers", that supplies of cereals would be brought to Iran to make up any avoidable deficiency to the harvest of 1943, provided that the Iranian Government carried out all the measures recommended by the American food adviser, Sheridan, including measures to prevent hoarding and the introduction of rationing, as well as the recommendations of the Road Transport

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79. Bullard to FO, Most secret, No.1465, Nov.20,1942.  
E 6860/69/34, FO 371/31407.

Committee. It was at the same time provided that the Iranian Government were responsible for the internal distribution of cereals and for ensuring that a deficiency in one area would be met by a surplus from another. The British and US Governments undertook, so far as possible, to ensure that the means of transport at the Iranian Government's disposal were sufficient, if put to the best possible use, for the proper distribution of these cereals.<sup>80</sup> Simultaneously, the British and American Ministers presented to Sā'id two notes which stated that both Governments were jointly arranging to bring into Iran 25,000 tons of wheat as the compensation for the Russian purchase, and that if the Soviet Government wished to participate in the agreement, a revised text would be signed to replace this one. The Soviet Government, however, declined to participate in it, in view of its own food difficulties. Bullard also presented another note, declaring that the food agreement in no way would diminish the British obligations under the Tripartite Treaty of January 29, 1942.

On the eve of the signing of the food agreement, the food situation in Tih̄rān had reached a critical stage. Sheridan had only one day's supply of wheat in the silo and

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80. For the full text of this agreement, see US Department of State Executive Agreement series No. 292, or 56 Sta. (pt. 2) 1835.



was ready if necessary to open soup kitchens. The wheat from Āzarbāyījān had not come as hoped, partly because of the Russian lack of co-operation and partly because of the inability of the Government to gather wheat. The British army could furnish only 1500 tons of flour from their stocks, and the Middle East Supply Centre (MESC)<sup>81</sup> had reported that it had no reserve stocks which could be made available. In the meantime, Dreyfus was, hopelessly drifting to find a solution for the wheat crisis, whereas the British authorities did not seem to be taking a sufficiently serious view of this crisis.

The deterioration of the wheat supply and the subsequent bread shortage culminated in bread riots of 8th and 9th December. In the morning of December 8, the student demonstration was joined by several thousand persons, including women and children, outside the Majlis at Maidān-i Bahāristān, crying, "You may kill us but we must have bread!" The crowd grew in the afternoon and the demonstration developed into rioting. The people were agitated against Qavām and they looted his house, and also food and clothing shops in the main streets. In the evening, demonstrations occurred outside the Palace. 'Abbās Mas'ūdī, the Ittīlā'āt's licensee, had gone to Maidān-i Bahāristān

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81. For the MESC's functions see Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946, op.cit, pp.169-193

(Baharistan Square) to deliver the Shāh's message to the people, was attacked and injured. The police and military did not seriously intervene and fired only in the air.<sup>82</sup>

The crisis was aggravated by the arrest on the same day by the British Army and the internment at Sulṭānābād of General Zāhidī, the General Governor of Isfahan. The news was badly received by both the Shāh and Qavām.<sup>83</sup>

On the morning of December 9, rioting recommenced. The police and army did not take effective measures again to control it. But, when in the afternoon the situation became desperate, the police and army received orders to take action. When an armed party of British troops tried to rescue their broken truck surrounded by mobs they were fired on by the Iranian police and three British soldiers were killed. The Iranian Government, later, agreed to pay five hundred pounds' compensation to the family of each of them.<sup>84</sup> However, a curfew was imposed in Tihrān at eight o'clock in the evening, and General Aḥmadī was put in charge to restore order. A battalion of British troops arrived in Tihrān from Qum on the evening of December 9, to protect British property and military installations. The Soviet Union, though aware of the British intention, refrained from bringing troops to the capital, which made a

82. Hasan Nazīh, who was a law student and an observer at the time of the bread riots of December 8, wrote a detailed account of the event, "Dar Tihrān chi khabar būd?" published in the Faryād, No. 5, 25 Azar, 1321, (Dec. 16, 1942).

83. See chapter 6.

84. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, March 26, 1943.  
E 3450/239/34, FO 371/35117



good impression on the Iranians. The American Minister, worried by the British action, wrote:

"British again blundered in bringing troops to Tehran, their position vis-a-vis the Iranians having deteriorated if possible. Russians on the other hand again gained in reputation by not bringing in troops. While Russians cannot be said to be liked by Iranians there is no doubt that their restraint and good conduct are turning many Iranians increasingly in their favor". 85.

Meanwhile, the Shāh had asked Qavām to resign, but he refused. He had the support of the Allies which helped him to refuse the Shāh's order. Instead, he lost his popularity among people who began to turn against him and to regard him as the Allies' tool. He suppressed all the capital press, and a Government newspaper, Akhbār-i Rūz, was published in their stead. Ittilā'āt was perhaps the only paper which suffered the longest period of the suppression, forty-three days. This was probably as retaliatory measure against the paper which had published an article by its owner 'Abbās Mas'ūdī, who had criticised the Qavām Government for its inability to solve the bread problem, three days prior to bread riots.<sup>86</sup> Qavām also jailed a number of people who were alleged to be responsible for these riots.

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85. Dreyfus to SOS, Dec.19,1942. US.F.R., vol.IV,1942.pp.221-2

86. 'Abbās Mas'ūdī, "Nān! va natīja-i iqdāmāt-yi dulat", 14 Azar, 1321 (Dec.5,1942).



The causes of the Tihhrān riots seemed confusing at first. There was a tendency to believe that they were spontaneous. But, the British Legation was spreading rumours that it was part of a German plot and the Russians seemed to have held the same view. The Iranians, on the contrary tended to believe that the riots had been inspired by the British or Russians. There were apparently some indications to justify the Iranian belief, particularly about British involvement. Why did the British choose such a delicate moment to arrest Zāhidi? Why did the British deliberately fail to bring 3500 tons of barley and 1500 tons of wheat to Tihhrān, earmarked for Iran, and hold them in Basra at such a critical time? Why did the British not bring five thousand tons of cereals to Tihhrān, being held in Ahvāz not in Basra as they had claimed? And finally, why did the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation(UKCC) procrastinate for two weeks in bringing five thousand tons of rice to Tihhrān from Māzandarān? These were, perhaps, the questions which the Iranians, at least those who knew what was happening behind the scenes, could emphasise and lead them to believe that the British were responsible for the riots. However, there is hardly any evidence available to show British involvement in the event. It is, however, safe to say that the British took advantage of the situation to bring back their troops to Tihhrān.

A few days after the rioting, both the British and American Ministers reported the causes of the riots to have been political intrigues on behalf of the Shāh against Qavām. The food shortage as a sentimental issue was used by the Shāh and his associates to discredit the Government and to get rid of Qavām. The Shāh had ample reasons to fear Qavām. Because Qavām had presented the full powers bill to the Majlis, talk of the Majlis dissolution was in the air, and he also had the support of the Allies. Therefore, Qavām might easily have reduced the power of the Crown, had he been free from the check provided by the Majlis.

However, these intriguers were the military clique headed by the Shāh consisting of General Yazdān Panāh, Chief of Staff; Rādsar, Chief of Police, and a number of young officers of the court group; and the civilian group, including the Paikār Party, a youth organization; Mas'ūdī, Rahnamā, Āzād, and Safārī, newspaper editors; Akbar Mas'ūd (Sārīm-al-Daula); deputies, Bayāt, Nīkpūr, and Yamīn Isfandīyārī; Suhailī, Tadayyun; Hasan and Karīm Akbar of Gīlan,<sup>87</sup> Their ultimate objective was supposed to be to get rid of Qavām and to set up a military Government under direct influence of the Shāh, including his group of young officers. It seemed that this group of officers

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87. Dreyfus to SOS, Dec. 13, 1942. US.F.R., vol. IV, 1942. p. 219. Two articles in the Damāvand, 13 Mordad, 1322 (Aug. 4, 1943), and in the Dād, 11 Aban, 1323 (Nov. 2, 1944), somewhat reveal the involvement of the Shāh and Mas'ūdī in the riots. These two papers were generally against the monarch.

prevented the police from taking effective measures during the riots. Colonel Ibrāhīm Arfa', who was shortly after the riots promoted to the rank of General, had addressed the crowd, assuring them that the army had orders not to molest them. Timmerman, the American Adviser to the Iranian Police, reported:

".... this demonstration could have been broken and beaten within a period of half an hour if proper Police methods had been applied".<sup>88</sup>

Even if the bread riots were deliberate and the people used as tools for political ends to evict Qavām, they certainly did not succeed. Qavām's position became stronger as a result of the riots. He could then press the Majlis to pass the Press Law of December 24, which his predecessor had failed to do. In fact, the new law was an amendment to the Press Law of 1908, according to which all periodicals had to obtain a licence to operate.<sup>89</sup>

The year 1942 ended while Qavām was still in office and was contemplating reforming his cabinet. Iran's foreign policy which had been supposed to shift towards more co-operation with the Allies with the signature of the Tripartite Treaty at the beginning of the year, appeared to be far from what the signatories had hoped for. The

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88. Dreyfus to SOS, Ibid.

89. See L.P.Elwell-Sutton, " The Iranian Press", p.66.



currency and food crises were solved. As for the bread, the result was continued chaos and, though Tihhrān was kept supplied with bread by feverish efforts at the last minute, Sheridan never succeeded in securing more than three or four days' reserve in the silo.

As for relations with the British, their influence in Iran grew as the year proceeded, but it can not be said that their popularity grew with it. During most of the year, the Russian policy in Iran remained an enigma. It also seemed to be more or less of a hand-to-mouth nature, owing, no doubt, to the acute problems which the German drive in South Russia set them. The Iranians, who were fundamentally terrified of the Russians and feared the worst after the occupation, were, on the whole, surprised that they had not had to suffer from them. By the end of the year, the Russians seemed to be discontented with the arrival of American advisers in Iran and worried at the ever-increasing influence of the Americans and British in Iran, both in the Central Government and in the provinces. They might have thought that the British and Americans were playing a 'deep waiting game', and were going to profit by the Russian war embarrassment and absence from the scene, and were steadily getting Iran into their pocket. At the end of the year, when the Russians began pursuing a more active policy as the fortunes of war changed, they spoke to Iranian Ministers against the

principle of having American advisers.

Throughout the year the question of the arresting of pro-Axis Iranians and Germans by the Allies was a disquieting matter between Iran and the Allies. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIXThe Last Policy of ReinsuranceThe Axis Plot and pro-Axis Organisations in Iran

## I

"....Persians who continued, after the tripartite treaty, to work for the Germans. This is understandable, since the treaty had been signed under duress; but it was our business to stop them if we could".<sup>1</sup>

The momentous shift in Iran's policy, which was to be achieved by the treaty that would, in turn, bring about genuine collaboration between Iran and the Allies, seemed to be slow, if not still motionless, during 1942. Despite the closure of the Axis Legations and the signing of the treaty with Britain and the Soviet Union, the Iranians never became hostile to the Axis, nor did they wholeheartedly turn out to be pro-Allies. As Millspaugh asserted, the Iranian "historic distrust and fear of the British or the Russians or both precluded any clear recognition of a common cause or genuine spirit of collaboration".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Sir R.Bullard, "Persia in the Two World Wars", p.14.
  2. A.C.Millspaugh, "Americans in Persia", Chap.IX, p.155.



After the signing of the Tripartite Treaty in January, 1942, a number of Iranians, including Government and military officials, continued to work for the Axis. The Iranian Government were aware of their activities and organisations, but they took no measures to stop them. They even closely collaborated with them on many occasions.

We call this "the Iranian Government's last policy of reinsurance with the Axis", in particular with Germany, whose successes, in the early part of 1942, in South Russia and Libya, had inevitably affected the Government and encouraged a tendency to sit on the fence.

In December 1941 the British Legation in Tihhrān informed the Foreign Office that, in view of the signature of the Tripartite Treaty, it was of the utmost importance to round up Iranian fifth columnists and pro-Germans owing to their potential danger to British interests. The Foreign Office replied that they preferred to endeavour to secure collaboration with the Iranians rather than to proceed to wholesale arrests immediately after the signature of the treaty.<sup>3</sup> The Furūghī Government was quite prepared to take action against a few Iranians, whose number should be kept as low as possible, as a deterrent to others, provided that there was definite evidence against them subsequent to the

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3. Bullard to Eden, confidential, No.321. Sept.28,1942.  
E 6157/122/34, FO 371/31419.

signature of the treaty and that any such action was taken with the consent of the Iranian Government. Large-scale arrest could not be approved by the Government unless the extension of war to Iran was imminent and action was urgently required on military grounds. These considerations did not, of course, apply to German nationals.

At the end of February 1942, a list of seven prominent and active pro-Axis advocates, against whom sufficient evidence was available, was prepared by the British Legation. The names were Vazīrī, Dārūgar, Darrūdī, Atābāi, Zulfaqārī, Ghafārī, and Daryūsh. The Soviet Embassy gave its support to the British, and the list was submitted to the Iranian Government, with the request that these suspects should be detained under Iranian Police supervision in Eastern Iran. After some delay the Iranian Government agreed and gave the necessary assurances to the British Legation that action would be taken. The Government had decided that those persons should be exiled to Kirmān and some other remote areas.<sup>4</sup> It soon appeared, however, that three of the suspects were still at large. In view of this, the British Legation demanded the immediate arrest of the suspects and their delivery to the British military authorities for internment. The Legation also considered that Atābāi, being the Shāh's brother-in-law, should still be detained

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4. From the Iranian Legation (Washington) to Department of State, undated. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942. pp.337-8.



in Eastern Iran under police supervision. After considerable hesitation on legal and prestige grounds by the Iranians, five of the suspects were, at the end of April, sent to Kirmānshāh to be kept under Anglo-Iranian guard. But, a few days later, they were arrested and sent to Ahvāz by the British authorities without the Iranian Government's consent. The sixth suspect, Muḥammad Ḥisām Vazīrī, disappeared mysteriously under the eyes of the police and he could never be traced until the end of the war.<sup>5</sup> As a result of further discussions between the Iranian and British authorities, some Germans and a few more Iranian suspects, including Naṣir Munshī and 'Abbās Mazdā, were detained for examination by the Iranian police, while one German was arrested by the British security authorities and sent to Baghdad under British military escort.

Early in June 1942 it became apparent that the Axis propaganda drive had gained momentum again in Iran, and there were reports of Axis agents passing through Turkey into Iran via Kurdistān. The British military authorities reported a series of accidents, some serious, some light, which were taking place at the ports and on the Trans-Iranian railway, some of which could only be attributed to sabotage.

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5. Nūrullāh Lārūdī, Asīran. Tihrān 1332(1952)p.181. The author was one of the internees at Shiraz. He furnishes an account of his and other internees' arrest, their activities at internment camps, and criticizes the behaviour of Iranian and British officers at the camps. Understandably, he is biased and uses invective language in his book. Ḥisām Vazīrī left Iran for Europe on February 27, 1944, by a forged passport under the name of Ghulām Riẓā 'Abbāsiyān. See E3126, May 23, 1944. FO 371/40/72.



On June 20, the British Legation made three requests to Suhailī: (a) that visas to enter and leave Iran should only be granted after reference to the British Legation, this is in practice would mean that the Iranian Government should abandon its rights to issue visas; (b) that the proclamation making Axis propaganda illegal should be made more specific by laying down the precise penalties which infraction of it would entail; and (c) that eighteen persons suspected on good grounds of Axis activities should be handed to the British for interrogation - in fact detention.<sup>6</sup>

Surprisingly, Suhailī granted the first request without demur; and arrangements were made to control the issue of transit visas via Iraq. Nevertheless, the Iranian borders could not possibly be closed to all unwanted travellers, and it was certain that Axis agents would penetrate into Iran with relatively little hindrance from Turkey through the disturbed areas of Kurdistān. The second request regarding the proclamation on Axis activities and propaganda, was also granted, though there were loopholes in the articles of the penal and military codes referred to as applying to infractions of the proclamation, by which a clever person could elude punishment.

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6. Bullard to Eden, confidential, No.248, July 28, 1942  
E 4619/3655/34 FO 371/31443.

The third request, for the arrest of eighteen suspects and their delivery to the British authorities, was met by Suhailī with a request that interrogation should not take place in Ahvāz. The idea of being sent to Ahvāz, as the British had demanded, in summer is, to many Iranians, peculiarly horrible. Therefore, it was decided that the suspects should be sent to Kirmānshāh for preliminary interrogation. On July 19, three Germans were delivered to the British authorities. As a result of further pressure by the Legation, Suhailī agreed on July 22 that by July 25 he would hand over eleven of the eighteen, but no action was taken, and Suhailī fell from power soon afterwards. In fact, Suhailī had been most unwilling to hand over any more Iranians to the British. His selection of the eleven was itself a very clever tactic and designed to obviate trouble for himself and to create it for the British; the eleven were either persons of no importance, or else men connected with the army whose arrest would tend to arouse yet more anti-British feeling in that on the whole distinctly pro-Axis force.

During the period from the time of occupation in August 1941 to the fall of Suhailī at the end of July 1942, there had been cases where Iranians, living in areas occupied by British or Russian military forces, had been removed from their homes and sent to "unoccupied" territory on the charge of being hostile to the Allies. Thus, about twenty persons were deported from Abadān to Tihhrān at the request of the AIOC, and several were sent away from Hamadān by the British

Political Adviser or at his request.<sup>7</sup> These deportations caused much correspondence and discussion between the Iranian Government and the British Legation. Another case of dispute was the vagueness as to the place of detention of suspects handed over by the Iranian Government to the British authorities; some were removed from Kirmānshāh to Ahvāz, which in summer is regarded rather as the French regard French Guiana. For instance, the Iranian Government made a strong protest when a very old official named Nabbīzāda, who had been arrested by the British military authorities in the south and removed to Ahvāz where he died a few days later, probably from the heat. When therefore, Suhailī was succeeded by Qavām, the British Legation decided to establish an agreed procedure with the Iranian Government to obviate the question of the place of internment for suspects.

In the early days of the Qavām Government, the British Legation submitted a new list which bore forty-five names, with a request for their arrest and delivery to their military authorities. This list had been drawn up, consisting entirely of names of persons implicated in the evidence given by Germans or Iranians already in British custody. Qavām proceeded to arrest the persons concerned, but he obstinately refused to hand over Iranian suspects.

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7. Bullard to Eden, No.321. op.cit.



There were, of course, two reasons for this; first, it would have been undignified for the Government to hand over their own subjects to aliens in their own country, secondly, Qavām was himself involved in pro-Axis activities, and he probably feared that those Iranians detained might disclose his connections under British interrogation. This they did. And we will explain this later. Meanwhile, the question was handled by the police with deliberate laxity. One of the principal suspects, Frau Bernstein, a German known to be the link between the Axis agents in Fars and those in Tihṛān, was, after her arrest, allowed to return to her house where she committed suicide. Similar negligence by the police caused serious concerns for the British authorities to press for the guarding and detention of suspects somewhere in the British zone not in Tihṛān. But Qavām resolutely refused to hand over any Iranians and stood out for their detention in Tihṛān.

While he had readily consented to arrest the forty-five suspects, he was asking the British Legation to furnish ample written evidence against them within twenty-four hours in accordance with the Iranian law. In their turn, the British were pressing the Government that arrested persons should be turned over to them without complying with Iranian law. As a result one more crisis was combined with those existing ones, viz, food and currency, in August 1942. The American Minister, Dreyfus, held the view that British disregard of Iranian susceptibilities was causing the Iranians to become increasingly bitter against them. He reported:

" British Minister takes view "I can't work with a Government like this" an attitude which may cause another political crisis...."8

On August 9, 1942, Bullard handed over a severe note to Qavām, complaining about the lack of co-operation. In the meantime, the Iranian Government presented a request for American intervention in the dispute between the Government and the British Legation, and it also appealed to the Foreign Office through its Minister in London to find a solution to this deadbck. Meanwhile, the Iranian press and public had been deeply stirred by these arrests and British pressure. The press took the view that the Allies had no right to require the Government to make illegal and unconstitutional arrests, that this action was undemocratic and not based on the treaty, that the wholesale arrests were as bad as treatment meted out to people by Riżā Shāh's regime and they were no longer secure in their homes. The press attack was directed mainly against the British, and the newspapers such as Nabard, Khurshid-i Iran, Iqdām, and Kaihān were prominent for the attacks. Bullard, presumably disturbed by the press attitude reported:

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8. Dreyfus to SOS, August 9, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942. p.336.

"...Situation will, however, remain unsatisfactory until Iqdam and Keyhan have been taught a lesson and I am asking for their suppression for a considerable period.....Prime Minister will probably object as he is reported to be somewhat beholden to Khalili of Iqdam for past political services".<sup>9</sup>

Later, in early September Qavām closed down the Nabard and Khurshid-i Iran for a short period and the Iqdām was also suppressed.

However, when the State Department was about to make a very mild demarchè, based on the Iranian request, to the Foreign Office<sup>10</sup>, Qavām and Bullard reached to an agreement over the question of suspects. Therefore, the State Department saw no purpose in making the demarchè in London, but an official of the Department added, "I do not think, however, that we should let the matter drop entirely".<sup>11</sup>

The agreement was secured owing to Qavām's endeavours to obtain the consent of the Majlis at a secret session, by assuming full and personal responsibility.

The agreement was, however, unsatisfactory from the Iranians' point of view, and in actual fact, the British authorities had the real control over the detention and interrogation of suspects. It provided for the detention of

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9. Bullard to FO, August 21, 1942 E.5143 FO 371/31385.

10. Draft telegram to the Ambassador in the U.K. (Winant), August 25, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV. p.340.

11. The Adviser on Political Relations (Murray) to the SOS, Sept.1, 1942, Ibid. p.341.



all Iranian suspects at Sulṭānābād, near Arāk, where there were British troops, and for the association of Iranian officials with the British authorities in the supervision and interrogation of such suspects.<sup>12</sup>

Much of the confusion and delay over the question of suspects and their place of detention, probably arose from the different policies carried out by the parties concerned in the matter. The British had insisted on the delivery of suspects to them, while the Iranian Government was prepared to hand over only foreign nationals. The United States Minister was inclined at first to consider the original Iranian proposal adequate, viz, that suspects should be detained at Tihṛān and tried by Iranian law. He was eventually persuaded by Bullard to go as far as to assure the Iranian Government that the fifth column was a danger which ought to be eliminated, but by then the question of principle had, in fact, been settled. The Soviet Embassy had evidently received instructions not to do anything which might be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of Iran, so they did not join the British Legation in putting pressure on the Iranian Government in support of British suspect policy. This did, however, not prevent the Embassy from trying to secure British help on various occasions. It was at Soviet instigation that the British

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12. For the text of the Agreement see Appendix III p. 559.

Legation requested the Swiss Legation to repatriate two Swiss subjects resident in Mashhad and alleged by the Russians to be anti-Ally. Similarly, in Tabrīz, when the Russians wished to secure the arrest of a number of persons alleged to be indulging in anti-Ally propaganda, they tried to obtain the support of the British Consul-General, who wisely confined his support to giving the local authorities a list of those persons.

One of the difficulties, which was encountered later on, was that the agreement, concerning the detention and interrogation of Iranian suspects at Sultānābād, between the British Legation and the Iranian Government, was inapplicable in areas where there were Russian troops, because the Soviet Embassy were not a party to it. The British Legation could not accept the odium of participating in Russian requests for arrest and detention of people against whom they had nothing at all. It did, however, appear that the Russians did not detain as many Iranians as the British did. They had detained six Armenians of Iranian nationality, among whom was the editor of the newspaper Alik, in Armenian; nick-named Musiyu Zhuzif (Monsieur or Mr. Joseph); the organ of the Dashnāk Party, at their detention camp in Rasht. The camp, previously a hospital, was closed in 1944 and the detainees were transferred to Tihrān.<sup>13</sup>

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13. Lārudī, op.cit., 1.180.

In early November 1942, the British succeeded in seizing documents from the house of a German agent, Franz Mayr, who was said to have close relations with the Court, particularly with Prince 'Alī Riṣā, and with influential Iranian statesmen. Berthold Schultze-Holthus, another German agent who, like Mayr, went in hiding at the time of the deportation in September 1941, gives an account of the capture of Mayr's documents in his book as follows:

"The representative of the German SD in Isfahan, a certain Herr Mayr, recently fell out with his closest colleague, an Armenian named Musa, as a result of which the latter went to the British Consul Gort and betrayed the hiding-place of certain secret German documents. They were apparently in a safe built into the walls of a ruined house and a dossier was found with the names of various officers who have been active in the Persian Resistance Movement. The German agent has disappeared since the incident..."<sup>14</sup>

When the news of the British discovery of Mayr's documents, which revealed a German plot to seize power in Iran reached Dreyfus, he reported: "It is not beyond the realms of possibility that British have exaggerated or manufactured this plot as an excuse for military occupation of Tihrān."<sup>15</sup> But in actual fact, according to the documents, a plan had been designed for execution on July 25 which was

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14. B. Schultze-Holthus, Fruhrot in Iran. Esslingen:Bechtle, 1952. English translation, Daybreak in Iran, London 1954.p.186. He travelled in Iran as Doctor Bruno Schultze and adopted Ṣabā as his Iranian name. The name Mūsā in the quotation refers to Mūsā Gāspāriyan.
15. Dreyfus to SOS, Nov. 6, 1942. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1942. p.179.



the date fixed by the Germans for the capture of Stalingrad and also coincided with the British retreat in Egypt. Arrangements for seizing the aerodrome, blocking roads and adequately dealing with Allies forces with German assistance and setting up a military government had been all worked out in detail. Many prominent Iranians, mostly army and tribal leaders, including the Chief of General Staff, Yazdān Panāh, General Kūpāl, Shāhbakhtī and Zāhidī, and Nāsir Khān Qashqa'ī were implicated.<sup>16</sup>

Bullard, and subsequently, the Foreign Office were quick to ask the War Cabinet for instructions to be given to deal with the discovered conspiracy and, probably, to arrest all those concerned. But the Chiefs of Staffs' recommendations, in regard with the plot, were these:

- "1) Military action should be taken against those concerned in plot against us.
  - 2) General Wilson recommends no action be taken at the moment against prominent Persians involved in plot, unless our hand is forced by failure to reach agreement over the currency situation.
  - 3) General Wilson suggests not to ask the Shah to issue a Firman or to occupy Tehran.
  - 4) General Wilson suggests that the best method to safeguard the supply route to Russia is by subsidising Nasir Khan and the Qashqais and the Chiefs of Staff are in favour of this method. The alternative is to take action against QASHGAI.
- This is open to following objections:

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16. Bullard to FO, Nov.11, 1942. E 6623/122/34, FO 371/31420.

- a) We should, with land forces, largely beat thin air, because the tribesmen would evaporate as they always do;
- b) In any case, we should use troops and/or air forces needed for more important tasks;
- c) Action against Qashgai would antagonise the Bakhtiaris and the Lur tribes, whose country lies generally across our road and rail communications north from Ahwaz. This would in time result in increased internal security commitments to protect those communications;
- d) we should drive the plotters underground without checkmating them;
- e) We should not to be (sic) striking at the root of the trouble, which is the Persian ruling class".<sup>17</sup>

The Foreign Office did not seem to be convinced by these recommendations. They only commented: " Wait to see the currency situation".<sup>18</sup>

In late November 1942, after the currency problem had been solved, the time was ripe to proceed with the arrest of the first bunch of persons who were incriminated by the documents discovered at Isfahān. It was thought that their arrest would scare the other conspirators, but, as Bullard advised, a prima facie case could be made against them for other reasons and the plot need not be mentioned to the Iranian Government. Therefore, proposals were submitted to the Foreign Office by Bullard in agreement with General

17. From Office of War Cabinet to Mr. Pink (FO), undated, E 6840/14/34, FO 371/31386.

18. Ibid.

The State Department recommended to the Foreign Office to proceed with this case "with utmost caution and regard for Iranian sensibilities in any action they may take with respect to alleged conspirators. The Department continued: " We consider it especially desirable that no public action of any kind be taken against Iranian Nationals until tension caused by wheat and currency problems has relaxed". SOS to the Ambassador (UK), Nov. 7, 1942. US.R.F. vol. IV, 1942. p. 189.



Wilson for the arrest of General Zāhidī, Colonel Furūhar, Deputy Naubakht, and General Kūpāl on general grounds of persistent and dangerous hostility to the Allied cause. In view of their importance, it was clear that it would be futile to request the Qavām Government to effect their arrest, and it was, therefore, suggested that the British military authorities should take the necessary measures themselves. It was finally agreed by the British Legation, British military authorities, and the Foreign Office that they would concentrate first on General Zāhidī, as being the most dangerous of the four persons concerned, and defer action against the others, in order to see first the effect produced by the arrest of Zāhidī. In fact, the case against Furūhar and Naubakht was not very strong to arrest them in December.

However, all necessary measures were accordingly taken by the British military, and Zāhidī was arrested without the use of force in his house in Isfahān and immediately taken to Sulṭānābād from where he was sent to Palestine.<sup>19</sup> As the arrest coincided with the bread riots in Tihṛān, it passed almost unnoticed. Both the Shāh and Qavām mentioned the matter

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19. An account of Zāhidī's arrest is given in Khandaniha, 20 Dai, 1331 (January 10, 1953). Also Fitzroy MacLean, the British Intelligence Officer who arrested Zāhidī, gives a similar account of the arrest in his book, Eastern Approaches, London, Cape, 1949. pp.265-74. General Zahidī at the time of his arrest was the Commander of the Isfahān Division. His constant intrigues against the Governor-General of Isfahān, Fahim-al-daula, and his obstructive interference in purely civil matters was harmful to the administration of the area. Though he handled the Bakhtiāris successfully, he stirred up trouble in Isfahān. One of his intrigues showed his clever technique well. About August 20, 1942, at one



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Footnote continued.....

of the nine spinning and weaving mills of Isfahān, a strike had been declared by the workers because of the low wages paid. The strike spread to nearly all of the factories and the employers appealed to Zāhidī for help (the Governor-General to whom an appeal should have been directed was absent in Tihṛān). Zāhidī seized his chance and sent soldiers to guard the mills and later received a deputation of workers under a military guard, for discussion of their grievances. He also saw the employers. It was then said that a settlement had been reached and that certain increases in pay would be given as well as reductions in the hours of work nominally eight hours plus two for compulsory overtime for men, women and children alike. Certain other concessions were also promised and it was agreed that work should begin again. No positive step was taken to fulfil the promises while work continued. The British Consul at Isfahān reported that he understood that Zāhidī had been bribed by the employers to do his best to double-cross the workers and cut down the promised concessions. Meanwhile, the Governor-General returned from Tihṛān and declared that he would safeguard the interests of workers if they would give him a couple of weeks in which to work. This offer was accepted. Soon after it came to light that the unrest among the workers which had been blamed on the Tūda Party in Isfahān, was the work of Zāhidī himself, who hoped, by stirring up trouble which he could then put down, to manoeuvre himself into a position in which he could say that Isfahān was really a dangerous place and required a military Governor rather than a civil one.

Later, in October, there was a campaign against Zāhidī in the Tihṛān newspaper, Khurshīd-i Irān. The first article gave a fairly accurate account of his misdeeds in Isfahān, and then it was answered in the Bākhtar by a letter signed by twenty-one of Zāhidī's advocates in Isfahān, denying the accusations. A second article appeared in the former paper, making more accusations, in particular that he had ordered the Economic Department of Isfahān owned by the wife of General Jahānbānī, the grand daughter of Zil-al-Sultān. This accusation was partly true, as she owed wheat to the Government. But, being closely acquainted with this lady and her family, I have always been given the impression that there has been age-old hostility between the Jahānbānīs and Zāhidīs. This Zāhidī's order in favour of this lady seems to be difficult to believe. Even prior to the capture of Mayr's documents in which Zāhidī was implicated, the British Consul at Isfahān was persistently asking for his removal because of his obstructive attitude. See, Isfahān Diary, from August to November 1942, piece Nos. E 6215, E 6221, and E 6604, FO 371/31418.

continued....

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Footnote continued.....

Col. Furūhar was Zāhidī's nominee, serving at Farīdan (near Isfahān). When, on August 3, 1942, Mr. R. C. Harris, British Vice Consul at Isfahān, Dr. Griffith and his son were murdered while on tour in the Durūd area, Furūhar showed considerable ineffectiveness in recovering the bodies and directing the enquiries. There was some reason to believe that the murder was not entirely free from the influence of German agents.

The Russians had found General Kūpāl so hostile to their interests that they had him removed from Āzarbāyījān. The Soviet Ambassador had proposed that he should be arrested by the Russians but had received no reply from Russia. The British, on the other hand, did not wish to make all the arrests and regarded it as most important that some of the arrests, including Kūpāl's should be effected by the Russians. Kūpāl's name was listed because of the Russians mistrusted him and because owing to his close connection with the Turkish Embassy his arrest, was thought, would frighten whoever was allowing the Turkish bag to be used illegitimately. See, Bullard to FO, Nov. 28, 1942. E 7020/14/34, FO 371/31387.



to the British Legation and seemed rather aggrieved that they had not been warned of British intentions in advance. The Shāh also sent 'Alā to the US Legation to register his protest against what he termed this unjustified action. 'Ala mentioned that the Shāh had said; "If the British can do this to my country they can do anything".<sup>20</sup> The British Legation informed in reply, both the Shāh and Qavām, that "any previous notification would have been very awkward for the Persian Government and it was accordingly thought better that the British military authorities should take full responsibility".<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after Zāhidī's deportation, more people were arrested and detained in connection with the German plot.<sup>22</sup> But these arrests dismantled only the first phase of the plot, and the second phase had not yet been dealt with. According to Schultze-Holthus, he and Mayr had divided their task between themselves.<sup>23</sup> The former was to incite the Qashqā'i tribes, while the latter had to recruit Axis sympathizers and organise them for the plot.

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20. Dreyfus to SOS, Dec, 8, 1942. US.F.R., Vol.IV, 1942 p.208

21. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, Annual Report 1942, No.121, March 26, 1943. E 2450/239/34, FO 371/35117.

22. For the names of detainees see, Appendix III, p.560.

23. Schultze-Holthus, op.cit. p.150.



## II

The pro-Axis Organisations

To provide a better understanding of Iran's foreign policy during this period, and to find out why the Iranian Government were implicitly trying to reinsure their ties with the Axis camp, a detailed study of the scope of the pro-Axis organisations or groups in Iran and the parts played by their various members, many of whom were in important posts, is essential.

These groups had been mainly organised by Franz Mayr and a number of Iranians of outstanding importance, but it must be pointed out, however, that none of these groups was an independent organisation. In fact, they interlocked in the most intricate way and there was much overlapping of functions. Many individuals appeared to belong to more than one group. There were several reasons for this. Various organisations had been set up from time to time, the most important of which was the grand fusion of all anti-Allied cells and other organisations under one direction of a Central Executive Body known as the Milliyyūn. Then again, what at first may appear to have been an organised group was in fact a method used by Franz Mayr to record a certain chain of contacts. An example of this was the FN group which will be seen below.

Milliyūn-i Iran

Franz Mayr described the objectives of this organisation in his own draft as follows:

"The Melliun movement is the unification of all forces and associations of Iran which aim at freeing their homeland and who, in their fight against Bolshevik Russia and the Anglo-Saxon world, see in National Socialist Germany their natural allies".<sup>24</sup>

The structure of the Milliyūn allowed for an Executive Committee which was to control and plan the future constitution of Iran. There were also a Political Bureau, a Military Bureau, a Party Secretary and a Chairman of Board of Leadership. The Milliyūn controlled the whole pro-Axis structure as far as the Iranian side was concerned, besides directing the activities of espionage, propaganda, military preparations and all other forms of subversive activity. It had planned for the day when the country could be taken over. On August 2, 1942, Vazīrī wrote to Mayr: "Please tell Berlin the following:- Transmit by radio in French, Persian and German that in Iran Melliun-Iran has united all powers that are national". In his turn, Mayr prepared a note for a courier to take to the German Embassy in Ankara for onward transmission to Berlin, on October 15, 1942. It began thus:

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24. Extracts from papers seized from Mayr's house.  
FO, August 25, 1943. E 5036/38/34, FO 371/35074.

"1. The Military, Gendarmerie and Tribal organisations are welded together in the Mellium Iran Movement. Everything is thoroughly organised in the provinces. Throughout the whole country they are ready to strike. Your energetic assistance with the Air force and arms is awaited. Landing grounds for aircraft and parachute troops and sites for dropping of arms are ready in every province."25

According to the documents the idea of unification took place about May 1942 and the Milliyyūn was formed by the end of July of that year. It is always clear, however, that although there was an Executive Committee, behind this lay again the guiding power of Mayr, Schulze-Holthus, M.H.Vazīrī, and finally Berlin.

The most important activities and jobs in the Milliyyūn-i Iran were shared by some outstanding personalities amongst whom were:<sup>26</sup>

1. Āyatullāh Abul Qāsim Kāshānī
2. 'Alī Hai'at, Ministry of Justice.
3. Mustashār-al-Daula (Sādiq Sādiq)
4. 'Alī Akbar Musavizāda, High Court Judge
5. Habībullah Naubakht, Majlis Deputy for Fasā (Province of Fars)
6. Husain Naivandī
7. General Murtizā Khān Yazdān Panāh
8. General Agivli
9. General Kupāl
10. Ihtishām-al-Daula (Qaraguzlū)
11. Sayyid Naqībzāda Mashāyikh
12. Nasrullah Subūhi, interned and later released
13. Ahmad Nāmdār, interned, who was acting as representative of Zāhidī in Tihrān.

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25. Ibid. p.119.

26. All the names of persons appear in this section were checked and consulted with the file FO 371/35074, 1943, Lārūdi' book, op.cit., and a number of persons somewhat involved in these organisations with whom I had interviews. Moreover, all the details and information on the pro-Axis organisations mentioned here are based on the same FO's file.



The Gulmuḥammadi Group.

This name was used by the Group itself, but was allotted to it by British intelligence officers in Iran when evidence of the activities of its members was first obtained by them in July 1942. It did, however, comprise numerous contacts and channels of communication, together with an espionage network and other subversive activities controlled by the Gulmuḥammadi brothers and by Naubakht. At the same time, of course, several of its members were in direct contact with Mayr or his lieutenants.

The main artery of this organisation was Tihṛān - Hamadān-Kirmānshāh with tributaries running into these three places. A great deal of its strength was drawn from the Iranian Army, but there were many civilians in it too. Tribal contacts were numerous, though for a time the southern tribes had been dealt with by Naubakht separately. The tribal contacts were somewhat modified when General Shāhbakhti was transferred to Fars, taking with him several officers who were members of the Hizb-i Nazi, the Nazi Party, as the Gulmuḥammadi Group called itself in Kirmānshāh, at any rate. This resulted in an increase of those who, like Naubakht, were ready to intrigue with the Qashqā'i and other southern tribes.

This group had three main functions. The first was to collect information on the disposition of British and Russian troops and later of American troops and to collect all material possible on Allied Military installations.

The second was to prepare for armed action in the event of the German troops reaching the Caucasus or in the event of an air-borne invasion by Germany. The third was the conduct of anti-Allied propaganda.

Written messages of this group were first intercepted at the beginning of August 1942 by the British military authorities and enough of its correspondence was seen later on. It showed that its activities had not slackened with the changing fortunes of the war.

The threats imposed on the Allies by this group were:

1. It operated on an important line of communication.
2. It was in touch with the tribes on whom the Germans were relying for their main endeavour in Iran.
3. It was a source of arms for the tribes.
4. It was the first "friendly" organisation that any parachutists would encounter who were landed in Kurdistan or that German agents infiltrating through Kurdistan would meet. The parachute connection was no mere bogey, as members of the Group such as Lt. Saḥarkhīz and Cap. Matīnī in Tihṛān were linked with the arrivals of parachutists.<sup>27</sup>

The chief members of this group were:

1. H. Naubakht, HQ. representative and Head of Society.
2. Aqa Qā'imaqāmī, Naubakht's deputy in the Society, Tihṛān.

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27. The first arrival of six German parachutists occurred on April 30, 1943. These landed near Daryācha Qum (Namak) and they were conveyed to Tihṛān with money and arms for Mayr. On June 17, three more Germans and Iraqi were landed north of Mosul by mistake while they should have been dropped near the Iraqi-Iranian frontiers to incite the Kurds. Hafengel, a German agent, had organised three hundred riflemen in Kurdistan. On July 15, three more Germans and an Iranian were dropped near the Qashqā'i tribal area, continued.....



3. 'Alī Gulmuḥammadi Nubakht's representative and Managing Director of the Society in Tihṛān
4. Capt. Ghulām Husain Gulmuḥammadi, Director for receiving Irānian and Foreign information for the Society, Tihṛān.
5. Capt. Ahmad Matīnī, Head of the records and in charge of lists of members.
6. Third Lt. Saḥarkhīz, co-Head of propaganda, Tihṛān.
7. 'Alī Akbar Kumailī, News Director and sender and receiver by code of telegraph messages, Tihṛān.
8. Monsieur Gabriel, Collator of Information, Tihṛān
9. Āqā Muntazīmī, Co-Head of propaganda and Keeper of codes, Tihṛān.
10. Āqā Furūhar, Naubakht's representative as Head of the Society in Tabrīz, Zanjān, Qazvīn, and Isfahān ( a roving commission).
11. Sayyid Abul Qāsim Mīr, Naubakht's representative as Head of the Society at Rasht.
12. Sayyid Ja'far Faiẓ Bakhsh, Head of the Society at Bābul, Bābulsar and throughout Māzandārān.
13. Āqā Qā'immaqāmī, Head of the Society at Simnān, Dāmghān, and Shāhrūd.
14. Nasir Khan Qashqā'ī, Head of the Society, Shīrāz.
15. Ihtishām-al-Daula (Qaraguzlū), Head of the Society at Hamadām, Malāyir, and Qazvīn.
16. Maj. Muntazīmī, Head of the Society at Khurramābād, Arāk, Burūjird, Ahvāz, Ṣaliḥābād, and Andīmishk.
17. Capt. Dilāvar, Head of the Society in Kirmānshāh, Nihāvand, Taraskan, and Shāhābād.
18. Col. Qā'immaqāmī, Head of the Society in Qaṣr-i Shīrīn, Khusravī, Pusht-i Kūh, Īlām and district.
19. Āqā Ardālān, Head of the Society in Kurdistān.

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Footnote from previous page continued.....

and joined Schulze-Holthus, and established connection with Mayr in Tihṛān. See, Ismā'il Rā'īn, " Māmūr-i Makhfi-yi Hitler dar Iran", Tihṛān -i Muṣavvar, Nos. 1279 and 1281, 2 and 16 Farvardīn 1347 (March 22 and April 5, 1968). Also see, Survey of International Affairs, op.cit. p.157, ft.1.



The Society claimed a large membership, but its exact and effective size was never known. The following were also members:

20. 'Alī Aṣghar, Tihrān Police.
21. Buzurg,
22. Capt. Muḥammad Ṣafar Sālārī, Army Officer, Tihrān.
23. Col. Ḥasan Khān Pārsā, Tihrān Police.
24. Lt. Col. 'Adilī, Army Officer, Kirmānshāh,
25. Maj. Hushmand, " " "
26. Capt. Alvandpur, " " "
27. " Kamiyāb, " " "
28. " Pidram, " " "
29. " Zirihpush, " " "
30. " Mukhtarī, " " "
31. Lt. 'Abdul Ḥamid Muḥājir, " "
32. " Nikūmanish, " " "
33. " Muna'im, " " "
34. " Muḥājir Āzar, " " "
35. " Yigāna, " " "
36. " Hujārī, " " "
37. " Daulatshāhī, " " "
38. " Murtaḥavī, " " "
39. " Mu'āvanī, " " "
40. Capt. Zarghamī, Army Officer, Tihrān, but visited Kirmānshāh as courier.
41. Col. Muḥammad Davvalū, Army Officer, Kirmānshāh.
42. Maj. Jalālī, " " "
43. " Firaidūn Ṣaulatī, Transferred from Kirmānshāh to Tihrān.
44. Capt. 'Alī Āzarī, acted as courier, based in Tihrān,
45. Jalīl Navīdī, Tihrān.
46. Āqā Muzaharī, business partner of the Gulmuḥammadi brothers in Tihrān.
47. Āqā Taqī Faiḏ Bakhsh, brother of No.12, worked in Gulmuḥammadi's firm.
48. Maj. Durmishān, Army Officer.
49. " Panahyān, went south with Shāhbakhtī.
50. Sgt. Qā'imī, Air Force.
51. Abdul Qadīrzada, Kirmānshāh.
52. Dr. Karīm Khān Sanjābī, son of Sardār Nāsir.
53. Salman Haqiqat, Kirmānshāh.
54. Maj. Saif, Tihrān and Māzandarān.

55. Capt. Dāvarī
56. Maj. Muḥammad 'Alī Ilhāmī , went south with Shāhbakhtī.
57. Abdul Ḥasan Ruṣṣhan, Hamadān.
58. Dānīsh Naubakht son of No.1.
59. Lt.Col. A 'lam.

General Shāhbakhtī was certainly aware of this group, if not actually a registered member.

### Hizb-i Kabūd (The Blue Party)

This was a society which had been formed by Naubakht together with those deputies who voted against the Tripartite Treaty. Its tone was solely anti-Ally and it took its name from the fact that the membership cards were of the same colour as the ballot cards used for voting against the ratification of the treaty.<sup>28</sup>

This society eventually developed most strongly in Tihrān and in Shīrāz where it was connected with Naubakht's operations among the Qashqā'ī. As far as Tihrān was concerned, the 'swearing in' of members took place in Naubakht's house. The aim of the society was to incite people to violent action not only against the Allies but also against the Iranian constituted authorities. A pamphlet which was used by the society in Shīrāz in February of 1943, clearly showed this aim:

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28. Ismā'īl Rā'īn, op.cit. " 'Amaliyāt-i Hizb-i Kabūd", Tihran-i Musavvar, 6 Urdibhisht, 1347 (April 26, 1968). Also see, FO 371/35074, p.121

"In the Name of Real life and Independence of Iran.

In spite of the fact that we, the sons of Iran, have more confidence in our sentiments than that of the other nations, and the people of the world know our fiery thoughts better than us, therefore, we know that we shall never be deceived by the tricks of the fascinating masses, and we also know that to-day they take away our food-stuffs and wealth by force and want to impose their ridiculous posters, showing us the importation of wheat for us from India. We can not believe that the guests of last Shahrivar, or in other words, the people in the last war who disappointed us in honour, glory and so on, would be considered our intimate friends, and would also take the least steps for us.

Today our responsible authorities are not able to take any steps towards our ease, and also are unable to work and to show their patriotism, we shall never expect anything from them, because the same secret guest would rule our dear country by the force of gun and Machine-gun, and with a cheeky face would order what is adapted to their policy.

Hurry up! Oh, the brave and the youth in order to eradicate the foreigners from the country".

"Make every effort! Oh, Iranians who love your country, and obey the order of God, and start a religious war. There is no remedy except a revolution.

Hizb-i Kabud" 29

The members of this society in Tih<sup>r</sup>ān were;

1. H.Naubakht, Majlis Deputy.
2. Dr. Javān, ex-Majlis Deputy.
3. Amir Taimur, Majlis Deputy.
4. Muhammad Husain Satipzāda, Tih<sup>r</sup>ān.
5. 'Atāullāh Rūhī, Majlis Deputy.

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29. This English translation is quoted from FO 371/35074, Most Secret, p.121.



6. Lt. Col. Alam, Tih<sup>ra</sup>n
7. Aqa Hijazi, "

The following were members in Shiraz:

8. Ali Salamiyan
9. Mihdi Parham
10. Ja'far Abtahi
11. Bahadur Qahramani
12. Kazim Pizishki
13. Sha'ban Qasr Khalili
14. Yusif Kazimi
15. Husain Ma'rifat
16. Hasan Ma'rifat
17. Mansur Sarraf
18. Ibad Khalidi
19. Nusrat Khalidi
20. Baha'-al-Din Zakhira
21. Manuchihr Dana
22. Ja'far Azari
23. Rasul Javahiri
24. Ahmad Ali Baiza-yi
25. Jamshid Sisakhti
26. Haidar Himmatian
27. Jamshid Tavvalali
28. Mihdi Hamidi
29. Ali Sidarat
30. Abdul Khaliq Hadad
31. Ghulam Abbas Muhibi
32. Muhammad Farahmand
33. Mahmud Khalidi

General Ahmadi was at one time a member of the Hizb-i Kabud. It is not known whether he had joined in order to find out what was going on or because of his political leanings.

Sīyāhpūshān (The Black-Clads)

This group was commonly referred to as the SP group and had been made up of people who were ultra-nationalistic in politics and whose chief adherents looked to the Japanese Legation for guidance and assistance after the events of August 1941, and until the time of the departure of the Japanese mission in April 1942. It was founded about January/February 1942 at a time when the pro-Axis persons were beginning to recover from the shock of the occupation. Many members of this group had been in touch individually with the Germans before the occupation, but the Japanese Legation became for a time the natural inspiration for anti-Allied activities for the obvious reason that the Japanese had the only Axis Legation left in Tihhrān for some eight months.

Franz Mayr's Diary and the captured documents showed that all these contacts were passed on to Mayr and his friends on the departure of the Japanese. The reasons were simple. The Germans had their own agents of German nationality at large and active in Iran, and it was obvious that any Japanese left behind for espionage or subversive activities would be far too conspicuous, even more so as there were not then any Chinese in Iran for whom they might hope to be mistaken.

The size of this group is not exactly known. But the SP symbols ran up to SP 40 in Mayr's papers. There were for instance SP1, SP14, and SP15 appearing, so that it is possible to say that there was in fact a member for each available number up to 40 at least.

The British authorities identified certain of the members of this group who had been referred to under this cover. The activities of the Siyahpūshān were mainly concentrated in Tihrān, Shīrāz, and Isfahān. The role played by this group, which contained only a few military men among its ranks, was largely political.

Its chief members were:

1. Āyatullāh Sayyid Abul Qāsim Kāshānī, Tihrān
2. General Zāhidī, Isfahān
3. Shaikh 'Abdul Majid Shīrāzī, Tihrān
4. Capt. 'Alavī, outlaw with Bakhtiyārī
5. Abul Qāsim Khān Bakhtiyārī, outlaw.
6. Hushang Manūchihri
7. Javād 'Alīābādī.
8. Yahyā Vīrā, Tihrān Municipality (Shahrdārī)
9. Tāyyār, Tihrān
10. Hājī Isma'īl Nīyā, Tihrān
11. Sayyid Naqibzāda Mashāyikh, Tihrān
12. Mahmūd Khusravī
13. Ashraf Adrienne, mistress of Kawasaki of the Japanese Legation.
14. Shahīdzāda, once a judge in Kirmānshāh
15. Sayyid Bihbahānī, Majlis Deputy
16. H. Naubakht, " "
17. Dr. Javān, ex- " "
18. Amīr Taimur.
19. Šadr-al-Ashraf, " "
20. Rūhullāh Mīrzā Jahānbānī
21. Ibrahim Khalīlī 'Amīrī
22. Col. Jahanbiglū, Isfahān
23. Maj. " "
24. Lt. Col. Dr. Abtahī, Tihrān and Isfahān
25. General Āgīvli, Tihrān
26. " Tajbaksh, Tihrān
27. Sardār Bahadur Bakhtiyārī, Shīrāz.



This group also had many tribal connections which are implicit in the names given above, but to make it clearer these included the Bakhtīyārī, Qashqā'ī, Tangistānī, Gūrān, and Taimūrī.

Jam'īyat-i Millī, Hamāyat-i Darmāndigān-i Īrān

(The National Society of Protection of the Disinherited of Iran)

The founder of this Society was Dr. Mahmūd Mushāvir. It posed as a charitable organisation and was founded at about the same time as, though apparently independently of, the Siyāhpūshān. From the very beginning it was in fact a cloak for political activities of an extreme nationalist tendency and was supported by many sworn enemy of the Allies. It showed in fact how the same currents ran through the history of the pro-Axis groups in Iran. In its early stages this society held meetings which Mayr and Friedrich Kumel attended. This Society never registered with the Ministry of the Interior as an official party, but its existence was known to them. It finally disintegrated and its members joined the other organisations after several of its members had been arrested in the Spring of 1942 as a result of the capture of the German agent, Kumel, and the arrest of Abbās Mazdā. It had a membership which numbered between 100 and 150, chief of whom were:

1. Dr. M. Mushāvīr, lawyer, interned.
2. 'Abbās Mazdā "
3. Nāsir Munshī, "
4. Lt. Col. Dr. A 'lam, Tihrān
5. Muhsin Mālikī, interned for a period then released
6. Naṣrullāh Subhī,
7. Āqā Hijāzī, later member of the Hizb-i Kabūd
8. Husain Naivandī, in hiding, later interned.
9. Muḥammad Husain Hisām Vazīrī, in hiding
10. Āqā Ma'ādīn, of the Ministry of Justice
11. 'Abbās Marjubān, secretary of No.1.
12. Āqā Jalāyir
13. Habibullah Khiltāsh, of the Ministry of Trade  
& Industry, interned.
14. Mahmūd Khusravī, representative of Mercedes Benz  
in Iran, interned in Palestine.

This society had been organised into cells, each foundation member being responsible for a group under him of ten members. One of these cells was linked to a Berlin based society or party known as Hizb-i Irān-i Āzād whose chief organiser was General Shaibānī in Berlin.

#### Hizb-i Irān-i Āzād (The Free Iran Party)

Little was known of this party in Iran beyond its Berlin connection. Dr. Mushāvīr and Marjubān were involved in the Iranian end of it. In July 1942, just prior to their arrest, Mushāvīr and his secretary, Marjubān, were turning out leaflets from Mushāvīr's house with the name of Irān-i Āzād. Mayr was certainly aware of this party as his documents showed.

Anjuman-i Tablighāt-i Irān (The Propaganda Society of Iran)

The interest taken by Mayr and Vazīrī in this matter showed that the religious element had not been overlooked, which was seen as a medium for propaganda. Vazīrī wrote to Mayr on April 22, 1942:

"Moreover we have increased the cell spirit in so far as we have founded a completely official society for the Islamic religion. This society is called Anjuman-i-Tablighat-Iran. The followers are all spirituals of Iran".<sup>30</sup>

The Society had been registered officially for the ostensible purpose implied in its title. It was, however, used as a cover for stirring up the religious elements against the Allies. It held its meetings at Subuhī's bookshop who was a prominent member and the son of the Majlis Deputy, Mīrzā 'Abdullāh Vā'iz. On October 1, 1942, Vazīrī wrote again to Mayr about Vā'iz:

"Also Vi/216(i.e. Subuhi)'s father makes a good speech. Yesterday evening he worked up about 3000 people to emphasize this action according to our instruction!"<sup>31</sup>.

"This action" refers to the arrest of the Iranians who had been sent to Sultānābād at the end of September 1942. On September 17, 1942, Vazīrī had again written to Mayr about Vā'iz's activity:

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31. Ibid, p.123  
 32. Ibid.



"Up to date Mirza Abdullah Fa'ez (sic.), the father of our arrested friend V1/216, speaks daily in the parliament mosque from 3 p.m. He talks quite mad on the lines we wish. He enquires of me daily as to what theme he should elaborate. He has an audience of 5,000 and talks about the Koran and the Marxist idea. Excellent!! The day before yesterday I sent Haji (Ismail Nia) to him and instructed him to say no political stand should be adopted". 32

### Hizb-i Irān-i Bidār (The Awakened Iran Party)

This party was founded in Tabrīz and, in 1943, it was apparently running candidates for the Majlis Elections. Its leader was Dr. Shāfī Amīn, "the best school friend of Vazīrī", who also had a brother in Tabrīz, Lt. Col. Amin. Its composition was not of any importance but Mayr's documents showed that the party was co-operative with Vazīrī and his friends through the intermediary of Jalīl Navīdī and Colonel Zinda Dil. It was taken, too, under the cloak of the Millīyūn.

### The FN Group.

This group existed only on paper as far as Mayr was concerned and was used by himself and others who knew the code for the General Zāhidī -Ahmad Nāmdār chain of contacts. This connection was regarded by Mayr as of the highest importance because of its political ties through Zāhidī and also through the same channel to the Bakhtiyārī and Qashqā'ī. It was in fact a way of counter-balancing Naubkht's

intrigues. Moreover, Mayr had strengthened his power by controlling several channels and his playing off one group against the other. The result was the impression that many thought Zāhidī controlled Mayr instead of the reverse.

#### Railway Section.

A special and an important section of Mayr's organisation known under the code name of A/216 had been established to deal with espionage and sabotage on the Trans-Iranian railway. The leader of this section, known as A1/216 or "Engineer A", reported directly to Vazīrī, or in his absence, to Husain Naivandī. "Engineer A" supplied Vazīrī with statistics of goods for Russia carried on the railway, general information relating to the war materials for Russia, and a description of landmarks to assist German bombers in locating stores of material lying in Bandar Shāh port. All the information was transmitted to Mayr who sent them to Ankara. Technical information on the railway was supplied by Kumel, who had received sabotage training before his arrival in Iran.

Unlike the other pro-Axis organisations, the Railway Section operated under very tight security covers, and it proved extremely difficult to be penetrated by Allies agents. Later, it was revealed by members of the other groups in custody that information about the activities of the Railway Section had been withheld from all except agents directly concerned, so that the risk of betrayal

would be small. It was believed that the organisation had been on the cell basis, with the object that each agent should know only his immediate collaborators.

The leaders of this organisation were believed to be:

1. Engineer Habibullāh Fathi, Rails and Bridges Dept.
2. Engineer Ja'far Sharīf Imāmī, Locomotives, extremely pro-German.
3. Engineer Abul Qāsim Šādiq Bihzādī, Technical Stores
4. Col. 'Abdullāh Ashrafī, Railway Police, direct agent of Vazīrī.

The organisation had designed sabotage plans on the railway at the "right moment".<sup>33</sup>

#### The Armed Forces and Police

As it had already shown, the Iranian armed forces were riddled with men of anti-Allied sentiments who had implicated themselves in activities of assistance to the Axis. Mayr's documents are full of allusions to the officers and units on which the Germans could rely. Apart from those who have already appeared in the foregoing pages some important military men involved in pro-Axis activities such as these Generals: Žarābī, Tājbak<sup>h</sup>sh, Pūrzanā, Kaikāvūsī, and Fīrūz.

The police also played an important role and contained many officers who were actively helping pro-Axis elements. 'Alī Hai'at had been entrusted with the job of compiling the lists of arrests which it was intended to effect through the Police if the movement in favour of the Germans succeeded.<sup>34</sup>

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33. Ibid, p.124 (both sides)

34. Ibid. p.125.



Tribal Contacts.

Mayr's documents revealed the fact that all the pro-Axis organisations had reckoned that they could rely on a large percentage of the tribes for support. The activities of German parachutists showed that this belief was not unfounded. Mayr's papers also showed to what extent they had built up their contacts with tribes whose names were these:

1. Afshār
2. Shāhsavan of Āzarbāyijān
3. Qashqā'ī
4. Buir Ahmadi Fars-Khūzistān
5. Afshār of Hamadān
6. Shāhsavan of Sāva
7. Fīndrisk of Khurāsān
8. Usanlu
9. Tāimūrtāsh
10. Sanjābi, Kirmānshāh
11. Papi
12. Bakhtiyārī
13. Gūrān, Kirmānshāh
14. Kalkhanī
15. Ūramān
16. Hājalilū, Makū area
17. Qara Quyunlū
18. Dashtī Bushihr
19. Tangistāni, Bushihr
20. Bābājani, Kurdistān
21. Kalhur, "
22. Javanrūdi, "
23. Lurs

In addition to these there was a widespread network of contacts among the "Jangalī" of Mazandiran.<sup>35</sup> But among all these tribes the Qashqā'ī appeared to be the menace to the security of the Allies.

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35. Ibid.

The Qashqā'ī and the German Plot.

There are three main tribal divisions in Fārs : the Qashqā'ī, Khamsa (Arab) and Buir Ahmadi. There are in addition the coastal tribes of the Dashti and Tangistāni, to the southeast of Bushihr. The most important of all is the Qashqā'ī on whom the Germans had great influence, and it was upon this tribe that Wassmuss used his influence, successfully, from the German point of view, in the First World War.<sup>36</sup>

Nāsir Khān, the Qashqā'ī leader, had given asylum to Schulze-Holthus and other Germans who were in possession of a radio transmitting and receiving set in Fīrūzābād, the capital of the Qashqā'ī, fifty five miles south of Shīrāz. Nāsir had no cause to love the Allies, in particular the British. He had fought and defeated his father, and was scared to death, bolting from his very shadow. He never stayed in one place long, never under a roof, always in the open. His small daughter had died, entirely owing to the vagrant life Nāsir was leading.

Early in March 1942, it became clear that trouble was brewing in Qashqā'ī country. Reports spoke of contacts between Nāsir Khān and the Buir Ahmadi tribal leaders, to the north of the main Shīrāz - Bushihr route, and with the

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36. For Wassmuss's activities in Iran see Christopher Sykes, Wassmuss, the Persian Lawrence, London, 1936. Also see Nicolson, Curzon: The Last Phase, a study in Post-War Diplomacy, 1934, pp. 129-130.

Dashtis. It was also suggested that the Buir Ahmadīs had been in touch with the Bakhtiyārīs to their north. It was thus possible to imagine a tribal rising stretching northwards from the Persian Gulf (Dashtistān), crossing the main Shīrāz-Būshīhr road in the Qashqā'ī country, and curving round through the Buir Ahmadis and Bakhtiyārīs to the north east. This would make part of the circumference of a circle whose centre was Ābādān. There were also reports that instructions had been sent out by Nāsir to tribesmen along the main road to be ready on receipt of orders to cut the telephone wires and sabotage the road with explosives stolen from the contractors in the neighbourhood of Pīr-i Zan, half way from Shīrāz to Kāzirūn, where the road could be effectively cut.

A combination of the Buir Ahmadī, Qashqā'ī, and Dashtī, given capable leadership which might be supplied by Schulze-Holthus could have threatened the port of Bushihr and the oilfields' area of Gachsārān, which had already been threatened by the Buir Ahmadī. The Khamsa tribe might have taken advantage of an unsettled situation to loot, and even to cut the Shīrāz-Isfahān road. But it was most unlikely, however, that the Khamsa would join in with any movement originated by their hereditary enemies, the Qashqā'ī.



This would-be situation in the tribal area was a source of anxiety for the Iranian Government and, naturally, for the Allies. Therefore, the Government invited Nāsir to come to Shīrāz to discuss the question of his land claims. He refused. Meanwhile, the Iranian troops in Fars were too demoralised to be able to take action against Nāsir Khān, and there was also a notable degree of reluctance on the part of the Governor-General and General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.) in Shīrāz, Major-General (Sartip) Prince Fīrūz to take any step against Nāsir Khān, though he was apparently co-operating 'satisfactorily' with the British.<sup>37</sup> Fīrūz's background in the Imperial Russian Army, which tended to influence him against the Soviets, and the effects of a stay in Germany in the early part of the war were factors which could hardly be expected to influence him in the Allies' favour. Besides, he probably did not wish to 'brusquer l'affaire' by fighting Nāsir or anything like that as, it would have generally had a bad effect on the tribes.

Negotiations with Nāsir Khān, however, began and continued throughout the summer without making any headway. The situation at Fārs had closely been affected by the military situation, and although it was a matter of conjecture, it seemed probable that the intention of those

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37. British Consulate, Shīrāz, to Bullard, June 10, 1942.  
secret. FO 371/31418

elements in Fārs who opposed any action against Nāsir Khān was that, in the event of a German victory in the Caucasus, they would have handed over the Government of Fārs to him as the preserver of local law and order on behalf of the Germans.

As noted previously, Nāsir Khān was generally known to be in contact with the Germans and to be harbouring German agents. Thus, those elements in Tihrān and in the south of Iran who did not favour the Allied cause, used their influence to ensure that no action should be taken against Nāsir, notwithstanding the representations made by Bullard to the Government. The situation was more disquieting since the road from Būshihrt to Shīrāz passed near the Qashqā'ī territory and any serious disorder in the area would have affected the delivery of supplies to Russia by this route.

At the end of September 1942, Fīrūz and the British Consul at Shīrāz went to Tihrān, where conferences were held with the Iranian authorities and the British Legation to decide what should be done. Fīrūz, earlier in July, had expressed his desire to occupy Fīrūzābād and thus have control of all that area - Qīr, Karzīn, and Farrāshband where Nāsir Khān had prepared landing grounds for the German aeroplanes, but he had been afraid to do so with the Qashqā'ī - Buir Ahmadi infested elements of which his troops consisted. Yet the Central Government had refused his request for fresh troops to replace some of his local

men, and to send some trucks.<sup>38</sup>

However, the general conclusion that was reached by the Government at the conference, in September, was that, pending a clarification of the position, measures should be taken to thwart Nāṣir in increasing his authority. The British Legation suggested that "this could best be done by making suitable arrangements with the leaders of the sub-tribes and by re-establishing the authority of the Government in the Fīrūzābād area",<sup>39</sup> an operation that appeared to be within the capacity of the Iranian forces.

While Fīrūz was still in Tihhrān, troops were positioned on the migration route of the Qashqā'ī tribesmen on their way to their winter quarters to disarm them. But the troops were inadequate and a detachment was ignominiously disarmed instead. Nothing effective was done by the Central Government either to occupy Fīrūzābād or to diminish Nāṣir's authority. However, the German defeats in Africa and the Soviet Union, and the evidence that the British authorities took a serious view of the situation in Fārs made Nāṣir Khān put some water in his wine, and somewhat desultory negotiations for his submission began towards the end of 1942. But this was again Nāṣir's manoeuvre to buy time to consolidate his position.

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38. Record of conversation between Fīrūz and T.V. Brennan, Consul at Shīrāz, on July 25, 1942. Bullard to FO, July 26, 1942. FO 371/31418.

39. Bullard to Eden, Report on Political Events of 1942, confidential, March 26, 1943. E 2450/239/34, FO 371/35117



In the earlier months of 1943, it became apparent that Nāsir had consolidated his position and acquired more adherents among landlords and peasants, who, since the Government were unable or reluctant to protect them, had, under the threat of pillage, no alternative to conciliating him. Numerous approaches by the Government not only failed to persuade Nāsir, stiffened certainly by Shulze-Holthus and other Germans who were with him and by pro-German elements in Tih̄rān, to accept terms consistent with the recognition of the Central Government, but rather increased his prestige. His successful, if polite, defiance encouraged other dissident tribal chiefs to show a bold front, and this resulted in a rapid weakening of Government authority over a vast area extending to the oilfields, and to an increase in lawlessness and insecurity which could hardly fail in time to affect the Allies' interests, particularly the British. In Bakht̄iyār̄ a young khān, Abul Qās̄m<sup>40</sup>, had set himself up in defiance of Government with pretensions to be a ruler of Bakht̄iyār̄, and had collected a band of armed followers which would allow him to exact money and grain from Bakht̄iyār̄ villages. In April 1943, at his instigation attacks were made on Iranian garrisons in the

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40. The incipient dissidence on the part of Abul Qās̄m Khān early in 1942 had been satisfactorily settled in May 1942, when he submitted to the Government. Subsequently, General Zāh̄id̄i, the G.O.C. of the Isfahān area, nominated him and another Bakht̄iyār̄ chief to be official representative of the Iranian Army in Chahār-Mahāl. This agreement proved most unsatisfactory as the Khans held up food supplies for Isfahān in order to sell them on the black market, and began to rob the population in the old way. After the arrest of Zāh̄id̄i in December 1942, Abul Qasim Khān ceased to enjoy the blessing of the local authorities.

Janiki country sufficiently close to the oilfields at Masjīd Sulaimān and Haftgil to cause a temporary anxiety for thier safety.

At the end of 1942, General Headquarters, Paiforce, were concerned about the safety of the Būshih~~r~~Shīraz route, which it was, at that time, intended to use to a greater extent for the transport of supplies to Russia. Although there had been no serious interference with the Allies military traffic, a series of minor robberies and hold-ups had hampered the work being done by British engineers on the improvement and maintenance of the road, and had created some embarrassment among labourers and transport drivers.<sup>41</sup> It was obvious that there would be no real security on the road until the Iranian Government had established some respect for their authority in Fārs, and that this could not be achieved as long as Nāsir Khān's power remained unchecked. The Iranian forces in Fārs were demoralised after a long period of inaction and were immobile through lack of transport. It was agreed by the British Legation and General Headquarters, Paiforce, that the Iranian Government should be urged to take effective measures to ensure the security of the road and to re-establish their authority over the Qashqā'ī tribe.

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41. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, June 29, 1943, E 3868 /239/34, FO 371/35117.



Furthermore, General Headquarters, Paiforce, undertook to supply the minimum amount of mechanical facilities for the operations, to provide basic rations, blankets and greatcoats for the Gendarmerie protecting the road, in the hope that this would help to a more efficient performance of their duties, and to send to Shīrāz a small staff of British officers for liason with the Iranian troops, and the supervision of the use and maintenance of this transport and the issue of the rations.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, the Iranian Government decided to appoint General Shāhbakhtī, a tough uneducated soldier of the old school with a reputation to maintain for courage, energy and astuteness in dealing with the tribes with full civil and military powers in Fārs. Although he was involved in the German plot, the British Legation had decided not to oppose his appointment, thinking it was safer to have him kept busy in a responsible job than to leave him free to intrigue against the Allies.<sup>43</sup>

The mere announcement of Shāhbakhtī's appointment had on the tribal situation an immediate effect which, however, wore off as weeks passed in inaction. There might at first have been some justification for this inaction in the delay in arrival of the transport facilities promised by Paiforce, without which, it was probably true, the

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42. Ibid.

43. Bullard to Minibranch for P.A.I.C., No.108, Dec.16, 1942. E 735/14/34 FO 371/31387



General was unable to act, but the delay gave time to the pro-German party, whose tool was Nāsir Khān, headed by Naubakht to work up a considerable agitation in the Majlis and press in favour of Nāsir Khān and against this "barādar kushi" (fratricidal warfare). That the British had pressed the Government to undertake these operations, that the British were providing assistance and officers to see that these operations were carried out was well known, and the agitation inevitably assumed a strongly anti-British bias. Only traitors, it was said, would lend themselves to British designs against the patriotic Nāsir Khān, whose father had so successfully foiled all British attempts to take possession of Fārs. This agitation had its immediate effect on the never very firm decision of the Government, which quickly communicated itself to General Shāhbakhtī and the forces in Fārs; and it was not until the end of May- General Shāhbakhtī went to Shīrāz in February 1943- that he allowed himself to be persuaded that the Government really meant him to act. After an initial set-back the first stage of operations, of which the object was the occupation of Fīrūzābād and other important places in the area dominated by Nāsir Khān, was successfully completed by the 12th June. Nāsir Khān with two Germans went into hiding in the hills. Organised opposition rapidly disintegrated and the Government's lost prestige among the tribes was restored. But this success was short-lived.

The Iranian forces failed to press their military advantage, new intrigues were set in train, encouraged, no doubt, by German agents; and the Buir Ahmadi tribe, under the absconding chief, 'Abdullāh Zarghāmpūr', was persuaded to lend support to the Qashqā'i. On July 3, the tribes, assisted, it was commonly believed, by treachery among the troops, scored a signal success against a garrison at Simīrum, a village on the northern limit of the Qashqā'i summer quarters. The whole force of some 900 men, after a poor show of resistance, was captured by the tribes with all its arms. When asked about this event, Shāhbakhtī said: "It is not an important incident, such things happen repeatedly in the world".<sup>44</sup>

This disaster altered the situation. The tribes were greatly encouraged. The Iranian forces, correspondingly, depressed, became obviously incapable of restoring the situation. By this time, it had already been decided that Būshīhr should be closed as an entry port for supplies to Russia. Therefore, the unsettled situation of the area would not threaten the security of the Allies' transport. But there was still ample cause for anxiety. The Buir Ahmadi, whose territory touches the southern oilfields, were now in open revolt, which would have caused much concern for the British; some sections of the Bakhtiyārī,

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44. Dād, No.144, 23 Tir, 1322 (July 14, 1943). General Shāhbakhtī was alleged to have caused deliberately the Simīrum disaster. An account of trials of those allegedly responsible for the Simīrum defeat is given in Dād, No.262, 2 Mihr 1323 (Sept. 24, 1944)



under Abul Qāsim Khān were known to be harbouring German agents and to be in close contact with the Buir Ahmadi and Qashqā'i leaders; the tribes, suffering under real and imagined grievances of the last twenty years, were in a mood that predisposed them to listen to incitement against the Central Government and the British who supported it. It was presumably the desire of the German agents to create the maximum amount of disorder in the hope of creating opportunities for sabotage, embroiling British troops with the tribes and dislocating to the maximum extent the Country's economy and administration.

Meanwhile, the Shāh and the Government proposed to send Qavām-al-Mulk to Fārs as Governor General with extensive powers, hoping that by his influence he would be able to rally against Nāsir Khān the Khamsa tribes, who formerly owed allegiance to his family, and even some of the Qashqā'i tribes. Bullard supported this proposal, but the Government, having decided that their salvation lay in Qavām-al-Mulk, then made every difficulty about granting him powers demanded by him. Moreover, the Government made no attempt to neutralize the powerful intrigues against his appointment that were at once instigated by Nāsir Khān's friends and other pro-Axis elements.

On July 26, 1943, Naubakht tabled an interpellation, in the Majlis, of the Government, and of the Minister for War, General Ahmadi, in particular in regard to their



campaign against the Qashqā'ī tribe. He asked the Government to explain on what legal justification two thousand troops had been sent against the Qashqā'ī, Buir Ahmadi, and Bakhtiāri, and "what" maslahat -i 'ālī barāy-i kishvar (supreme expediency for the country) had prompted this internal war contrary to national unity".<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, the Foreign Office gave authority to Bullard to make use of information about the German plot at his discretion. This authority arrived at a most opportune moment, as Naubakht had just tabled his interpellation. Therefore, Bullard accordingly furnished the Prime Minister, Suhailī, and the Minister for War with suitable evidence regarding Naubakht's pro-Axis and other "treasonable" activities, both in connection with the plot and since that date, so as to enable them "to produce a crushing reply" to the interpellation which was fixed to take place for August 24. At the same time, Bullard, in a letter of August 5, requested Suhailī to withdraw Naubakht's parliamentary immunity to enable him to be arrested and sent to Sulṭānābād for detention and interrogation in accordance with the Anglo-Iranian agreement of 1942.<sup>46</sup> Naubakht, undoubtedly scenting danger and realising how weak his hand had become, particularly

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45. Īrān, 5 Mordad, 1322 (July 27, 1943). Also see Ramazani, op.cit., p.56.

46. Bullard to Eden, confidential, No.393, Sept.15, 1943. E 5658/239/34, FO 371/35117

in view of the arrest of certain Germans in Tih<sup>̄</sup>rān, failed to present himself at the Majlis on the day appointed for the Government's answer to the interpellation - August 24. The Government did not feel themselves strong enough to ask the Majlis to remove his immunity. Naubak<sup>h</sup>t and his son fled to Shī<sup>̄</sup>rāz district.

However, it was not until August 10, that Qavām-al-Mulk left for Shī<sup>̄</sup>rāz. Meanwhile, Nā<sup>̄</sup>sir Khān and his brother, Khusrāu had already notified the Governor of Bakhtīyārī, Murtizā Qulī Khān, a fellow-tribesman, of their desire to open negotiations with the Central Government. This was undoubtedly in part due to the appointment of Qavām-al-Mulk, but to a greater extent to the fall of Mussolini and the Russian victories, news of which had by this time filtered through the tribes. On August 11, a meeting was arranged, at Kulār(near Abada), between Nā<sup>̄</sup>sir, Khusrāu, the Governor of Bakhtīyārī, and the newly appointed G.O.C. of the forces in the South, General (Sarlashgar) Jahānbānī, at which Colonel Robert, a British liason officer, who had established some personal prestige with the Qashqā'ī leaders, was present.<sup>47</sup> The outcome of this meeting was that Khusrāu agreed to go to Tih<sup>̄</sup>rān to express repentance for past

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47. Ibid.

misdeeds, and to ask for certain terms for himself and his brother.<sup>48</sup> These terms were; Khusrau should be made governor of the Qashqā'ī, he undertook to return all arms captured from troops and to restrain the tribes from robbing; Nāsir Khān should be allowed to be elected a Majlis Deputy for Fīrūzābād, and when protected by that immunity he would leave Qashqā'ī territory; the Government should immediately return to Nāsir those of his lands held by the Government.

When the news of this settlement reached Bullard, he informed Suhailī that he would not be satisfied unless they included an undertaking that the Qashqā'ī would hand over any Germans in their territory and would allow British officials free movement among the tribes. Khusrau Khān signed an undertaking to this effect before leaving Tihran.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of the conciliatory replies given by the Government to Khusrau and their perhaps too evident desire to settle the trouble in Fārs by peaceful means, Nāsir Khān continued for a while to profess dissatisfaction with the assurances given. He claimed that his distrust of Qavām-al-Mulk that was hindering a settlement. In fact, according to the diary of a captured German agent, Qavām-

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48. Iran, 23, Mordad, 1322 (August 14, 1943)

49. Bullard to Eden, No. 393, op.cit.



al-Mulk's appointment to Shīrāz had been regarded by the Germans with great alarm.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, Nāsir Khān improved his relations with both the Government and the British authorities to whom he handed over all Germans who were in his area in exchange for two of his sons who had been in Germany and, on their way to Iran, "fell into British hands". Thereby the German menace in the Qashqā'ī area was eradicated. In later years, Bullard said; "This was never a serious menace, but it was a cause of annoyance and anxiety when we had enough on our minds already".<sup>51</sup>

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50. Ibid.

51. Bullard, "Persia in the Two World Wars", op.cit., p.14.

## IV

Qavām-al-Saltana and the German Plot

Qavām's involvement in pro-Axis activities until at least August of 1943 appeared to have shocked the British who discovered such involvement through interrogations and written evidence obtained from those interned at Sultānābād or other internment camps. Although the British did not seem to have revealed their discovery to the Iranian Government, and because no action was taken against him by the Allies, Qavām might have been under the impression that his activities were not revealed.

This revelation enables us now to see how the "last policy of reinsurance with the Axis" was initiated within the years prior to the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran in August 1941, and also to see how it was implemented after the occupation, while Iran was nominally one of the parties to the treaty. Finally it would throw light on undeclared foreign policy of Iran during this period. Undoubtedly, the Suhailī and Qavām Governments were instrumental in carrying out this undeclared policy.

In the early part of 1942 Qavām was reported to have been in contact with the Japanese Legation. He had made some kind of offer to the Japanese Minister at about the time of the fall of the Furūghī Cabinet and the formation of the first Suhailī Cabinet.

The exact terms of this offer are not known but the sense of it was that Qavām should once more take an active

part in politics and form a cabinet with himself as Prime Minister. His policy would be to obstruct the Allies as far as he might dare without actually antagonising them and to prepare the ground quietly for the day when the Japanese forces should arrive to drive out the British and Russians. The Japanese Minister had apparently replied, somewhat far sightedly, that he did not think that Japanese troops would arrive so soon, as to forestall Qavām falling from power again as a result of such a policy.<sup>52</sup>

Had such a story been told at that time, it would have been difficult to believe. But it can now be seen why Qavām energetically intrigued against Suhailī to eliminate him from premiership as he was about to give in to the British pressure concerning the delivery of pro-Axis suspects to them.

Qavām's first contacts with the Germans were made in the time of Riḏā Shāh, before the German attack on the Soviet Union. A committee composed of Qavām, General Murtiḏā Khān Yazdān Panāh, General Qadīmī, Hakīm-al-Mulk, Mutashār-al-Daula, and Husain 'Alī Qaraguzlū (Fath-al-Saltāna) was formed. This secret committee was in touch with other prominent Iranians and its secret intention was to contrive the

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52. FO, Most Secret, March 24, 1944. E 1861, FO 371/40180.



overthrow of Riżā Shāh with German aid. Secret meetings were held in Tihhrān and an emissary with good German contacts, Qaraguzlū , was sent to Berlin to approach the German Government for assistance. A plan was adopted and agreed to by all parties, but it was spoilt by the jealousy and intervention of Ettel, the German Minister in Tihhrān, who prided himself on his influence and friendship with Riżā Shāh. The result was a struggle between the German Foreign Ministry and High Command until it was too late to do anything before the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran.<sup>53</sup>

The Government which it was hoped would be established in Tihhrān was thus: Qavām, Prime Minister; Yazdān Panāh, War; Qadīmī, Chief General Staff; Mustashar-al-Daula, Foreign Affairs; Qaraguzlū, the Interior, and Hakīm-al-Mulk did not want a post.

The occupation of August 1941, for a while, upset everything, but the swift advance of the Germans towards

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53. Ibid.

Bahrām Shāhrukh, who was once a Persian broadcaster for Berlin Radio and then returned to Iran and became the Director of Propaganda; and who was alleged by some newspapers to have been a British spy, wrote a series of articles in 1948 in which he gave an elaborated account of this secret committee and its operations, but there was never any mention of Qavām's name in the articles in which Qavām was only referred to as "yikī az bā fikrtarīn siyāsatmadārān" (one of the most thoughtful statesmen). See B. Shāhrukh, "Khākistar-i Garm" (The warm Ash), Mard-i Imrūz, Nos. 132, 136, & 139, From 12 Dai to 18 Bahman 1326 (Nan. 2 - Feb. 7, 1948)

the Caucasus revived their interest in the plan for a coup d'etat which would be favourable to themselves. The previous coup plan, which was drawn up in 1940, according to Qaraguzlū, was for some officers to penetrate to the palace and arrest Riżā Shāh,<sup>54</sup> But this time Ahmad Akbarī, who was later interned at Sultānābād, was sent from Berlin by the Germans with a special micro-photo message to contact Qavām once more. The committee was to be told through this channel that in the summer of 1942 German troops would reach the Iranian frontiers, that the German Government desired the closer co-operation of the Iranian Army, which in the circumstances would have to be reformed, and that the committee should take power at the appropriate moment. Financial help would be given if necessary.<sup>55</sup> The broad lines of this policy are familiar and can be compared to the line which Mayr was taking during the summer of 1943 before his capture.

However, Akbarī arrived in Tihrān in April 1942. He was suspected by the British of collaboration with the Germans, and was arrested by the Iranian Police at the Legation's request. But he was set free soon without being properly interrogated. He did not deliver the message personally to Qavām as he was afraid to draw attention to

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54. Ibid. No.136.

55. Ibid. No.139. Also see E 1861, op.cit.

himself, and Qavām was at that time in Lāhījān. He therefore contacted Hasan Qaraguzlū, the son of Faṭḥ-al-Saltāna, who carried a letter to Lāhījān, and it was through this same channel, after he had been released by the police that he actually met Qavām.

When interrogated, Akbarī gave an account of his pro-Axis activities and his meetings with Qavām. Extracts of a statement written and signed by Akbarī read thus:

"My conversation with the Qavam lasted at most ten minutes and concerned the contents of the letter. He explained that he could not give me an immediate reply and must think about it. When I asked him whether he could provide me with a W/T set, he replied to the negative. At the second meeting he said it was still impossible to undertake anything, When I sent Gharagozlou to him for the third time he replied that if German troops reached the Persian frontier he would be in a position to do something.... In the meantime I heard that all those who had been in Germany were to be arrested. I then went for the third and last time to the Qavam and asked him to see, if possible, that I was not arrested. He said that he could try to keep all those who had been arrested in Persia. I asked when I was to be arrested and he replied it would be on the next day or the following day".<sup>56</sup>

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56. E 1861, op.cit., p.78



This last meeting was when Qavām was Prime Minister. It can be seen how the policy of reinsurance was at work while the head of the Government had been committed by the treaty to collaborate with the Allies. It might well be asked why he saw fit to warn a man whom he knew to be a German agent against impending arrest at the request of the British Legation, thus enabling him to go into hiding. Akbarī was not captured for a whole year as a result of this timely warning during which time he was able to work closely with Mayr. After Mayr's capture, Akbarī was still managing the radio transmitter in the Bakhtīyārī country with two Germans.

In support of Akbarī's evidence there is also the signed statement of Hasan Qaraguzlū :

"Some two years ago a person came to the office and introduced himself as Akbari...After a few days had passed the man came again and disclosed that he had a letter which he had to give to the Qavam-es-Sultaneh and that, since he had newly arrived and in view of his travels did not know anyone, would I do this for him(i.e. hand over the letter). I went away and delivered the letter in Lahijan. When Akbari handed this to me, it was understood that I ask when the Qavam was coming to Tehran. I put the question and he said that, for the time being, he was very busy with some work but that he would come in ten or fifteen day's time. On my return I gave an exact account of what had taken place to Akbari.

You have asked what kind of work they were engaged upon. I have heard and seen that they were continually preparing to bring about some trouble and were working for a day that would be one of the worst of which the imagination could conceive. This policy they continued".<sup>57</sup>

Meanwhile, things were going rather well for the Germans. The German drive for the Caucasus in August 1942 was in full swing. Qavām was Prime Minister and Mustashār-al-Daula and Hakīm-al-Mulk had been brought into the Cabinet as Ministers without portfolio. The only puzzle was the omission of General Yazdān Panāh. Qavām gave his fellow conspirators as a reason for this that Yazdān Panāh would thus be freer to plan the necessary reforms of the Army if he were left out for a time.

Qavām's plans were closely linked with his brother Vusūq-al-Daula who was in Switzerland at the time and it was through him that Qavām kept in touch with Berlin after Akbarī had gone into hiding. He endeavoured to send Vusūq as Ambassador to Turkey where he could act as a convenient intermediary. Vusūq was in fact nominated for the post but his poor health never improved sufficiently and he went to Geneva instead and the Germans contacted him there.<sup>58</sup>

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57. Ibid.  
58. Ibid.

This allocation of trusted people in diplomatic posts was a favourite point of the policy of pro-Axis elements. Mayr and Naubakht were both interested in getting another Qaraguzlū to Turkey in a diplomatic post. This was Ihtisham-al-Daula, later interned at Sultānābād and a confessed collaborator of Mayr. Both Qavām and Mayr were interested in getting General Kūpāl to Turkey as Military Attaché.

The development of events proved, however, too much for Qavām's plans. The battle in Russia went against the Germans, they were defeated in Africa, and finally he himself ceased to be Prime Minister. Mayr never actually contacted Qavām personally, but there were signs that they had common friends and their respective aspirations dovetailed neatly. Hūshang Manūchihri, one of the sons of Shaikh 'Abdul Majīd Shīrāzī, was in an appropriate position to know what the pro-Axis persons were attempting. He once stated that in 1942 Qavām had much contact with Nāsir Khān and that he used Āyatullāh Kāshānī and Sayyid Naqībzādā Mashāyikh as his intermediaries.

Qavām when in office did nothing to prevent Naubakht from visiting Nāsir Khān at a time when it was said that Naubakht was not only hostile to the Allies but supporting tribes with whom there were known to be Germans living. Mūsā Gāspāriyān, the Armenian who used to live with Mayr until they quarrelled in Isfahān in November 1942, thus leading to the capture of Mayr's documents and Gāspāriyān



himself, gave some interesting evidence under interrogation. He asserted that Mayr was in touch with Qavām through the intermediary of Naubakht and Kāzīmī who later resigned from the Ministry of Finance. Qavām, when Prime Minister, sent a message to Mayr asking him to suggest to the German Government that Tihhrān should not be bombed from the air. Mayr had apparently replied that this could be arranged on these conditions: (a) Iran must undertake not to fight Germany under any circumstances; (b) the Qavām Government must give clear instructions to the Iranian Police that no German or their agents in Iran should be interfered with; (c) All British and Allied nationals must leave Tihhrān prior to its being declared an open town.<sup>59</sup>

Gāspāriyān also recounted how Mayr told him of how Qavām instructed Kāzīmī to keep in touch with Mayr through Naubakht. Mayr again mentioned the suggestion of Tihhrān becoming an open town, and also spoke of Naubakht's plans for installing Nāsir Khān on the throne instead of the Shāh.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, when Mayr was captured there were found in his possession notes in his own handwriting for a report on the political situation in Iran which it was his intention to transmit to Berlin. He had written among other things:

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59. Ibid. It must be mentioned that the question of making Tihhrān an open town was actually raised in 1942 by the Government.

60. Ibid.

"Two combinations have been formed in Isfahān; one against the tribes which comprises the Court, Parliament and well-known servants of the British ... on the other side is the Freedom Front of the Mellian controlled by me. It has the nation behind it and affinities with a great part of the forces ranged against the Court under Qavam-es-Sultaneh with their great press influence".<sup>61</sup>

With the eradication of the pro-Axis organisations and elements from Iran's political scene, and the change of fortunes against Germany in the war, Iran had to adopt a somewhat new foreign policy, this time, to ensure her place in the Allied camp. Thus, on September 9, 1943, she declared war on Germany by a Farman (royal decree) of the Shāh, and on the same day the Majlis approved the decree by a vote of 73 to 4.<sup>62</sup> This new rapprochement with the Allies was not brought about as suddenly as it might appear. Its initiation went back so far as late December 1942 when Iran expressed her desire to adhere to the United Nations Declaration of January 1, 1942.

However, after recalling Iran's policy of neutrality, Suhailī, for the first time, publicly admitted German activities in Iran, and at the same time denounced them as being against the interests of the country. Then 'Alī Dashtī attacked Rīzā Shāh's policy of neutrality, and

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61. Ibid.

62. Iran, 18 Shahrivar 1322 (Sept. 10, 1943).

suggested what foreign policy Iran should adopt. He said:

"One of the unfinished works of the past was this policy of neutrality .... bidūn-i rūdar bāyistī bāyad I'tirāf kard (Frankly, it must be confessed) that we are a nation who have two big neighbours. Until the time when these two neighbours were not allied, the adoption of neutrality had been in our interests. But when these two became allied, neutrality would then be nonsense". 63

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63. Muzākirat-i Majlis, Daura sizdahum, 18 Shahrivar 1322 (September 10, 1943).



## CHAPTER SEVEN

Foreign Interference in the Fourteenth Majlis Elections

## I

As noted in Chapter Five, by the end of 1942, and particularly after the bread riots of December, the Shāh's relations with Qavām had deteriorated from bad to worse. The Shāh was determined to direct and control the army, and interpret literally the constitutional principle that he was the Commander-in Chief of his forces. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, was endeavouring to assert and establish the principle of ministerial responsibility for all Ministries, especially the Ministry of War, and he had not long previously asked for full powers from the Majlis in order to assume personal responsibility to deal with the current affairs of the country. That request, however, provoked strong opposition from both the Majlis and the Court and it was not followed up. It was obvious that such political manoeuvring for power would only cause greater inefficiency and slowness in the administrative machine. And it did indeed. Throughout this time the Allies' representatives supported Qavām, and Bullard endeavoured to effect a reconciliation between the Shāh and Qavām.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Bullard to Eden, Confidential. No.80. Feb.25,1943.  
E 1775/38/34, FO 371/35070

It was in the middle of January 1943 that a reconciliation seemed to have taken place. Qavām introduced new members of his Cabinet to the Majlis on February 21: Javād Āmirī at the Ministry of Justice (instead of the Interior); Farajullāh Bahrāmī at the Ministry of the Interior; Muhsin Ra'īs at the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs; 'Alī Mu'tamidī at the Ministry of Roads and communications; and Naṣrullāh Intizām at the Ministry of Health. Qavām also announced that Allāhayār Sālīh, the economic adviser to the Iranian Legation in Washington, would become Minister of Finance on his return from the United States. His appointment was believed to be due to the suggestion of Dr. Millspaugh. At the same time the Prime Minister tabled a Bill for the establishment of a new Ministry of Labour and National Economy. This Ministry was to co-ordinate all the welfare of the working and peasant classes, to find work for the unemployed, and to initiate measures to prevent a rise in the cost of living. It was probable that its formation had been suggested, if not urged, by the Shāh, who had become aware of the miserable plight of the lower classes and had been preaching reform from above as the only alternative to revolution from below. The Shāh and many others feared that the influence of Soviet ideals, which were commanding increasing respect and attention, might, however little communism might appeal, incite the lower classes to abandon

their long-suffering patience.<sup>2</sup> Conditions arising from the war had greatly widened the gap between the rich and the poor. On the one hand, fortunes were being amassed by contractors, landowners, and hoarders, on the other, scarcity and ever-rising prices increased the discontent of the many.

The Minister designated for this new Ministry, Dr. Musharaf Nafīsī, was the Minister of Finance in Furūghī's Cabinet, and it was known that he was well thought of by the Shāh, who had probably nominated him for the post. The Majlis did not receive this announcement with enthusiasm and Qavām was well advised not to put the new Cabinet to the vote. The Deputies showed surprising opposition to Dr. Nafīsī and the new Ministry which had not come into existence. Of the new Ministers three, Ra'īs, Mu'tamidī and Intizām, were regarded as the Shāh's nominees, and were in consequence looked at with suspicion by many members of the Majlis.<sup>3</sup>

The new Cabinet was received generally without enthusiasm or criticism, while the Majlis Deputies showed their usual obstructiveness--some suspicion of the new ministers, others disappointed that none of the Deputies had been appointed to ministerial rank.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, a sudden vicissitude of Qavām's fortune was marked by a Majlis vote of confidence

2. Military Attaché's Intelligence Summary (Hereafter cited as MAIS), Secret, No.4. Jan.21-26, 1943. E 864/110/34, FO 371/35129.

3. Ibid.

4. Bullard to Eden, No.80, op.cit.



on February 7. This somewhat surprising result was secured partly by Qavām's acceptance of the Bill for the head of the Bank Millī to be chosen by the Majlis,<sup>5</sup> and partly by political manipulation and promises of favours to the Deputies. Qavām was always tended to regard success in political manoeuvre as more important than good administration; on the other hand, since he was opposed by the Shāh and had little support from the people and press, it was natural that he should try to win over the Majlis. In doing so, Qavām introduced a Bill designed to abrogate the law of the 22nd Tir, 1306, that no Deputy could be appointed a Minister without resigning and waiting for three months, but that attempts to buy over the Majlis merely succeeded in raising acute jealousy between rival Deputies who longed for a ministerial post, and the Bill was soon referred to a commission and shelved.

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5. On February 4, the Majlis endeavoured by a snatch-vote to make the appointment of Governor of the Bank Millī dependent on the vote of the Majlis, the effect of which would be to remove from the post Abul Hasan Ibtihāj, although very nationalistic, was believed to be well disposed to the British Legation, the action of the Majlis was to some extent an attack on the British, as well as on Qavām. See Bullard to FO, Feb. 6, 1943. E 763/38/34, FO 371/35068

The immediate outcome of the vote of confidence was the resignation of Bahrāmī (Dabīr A'zam), the rebellious Minister of the Interior, who had caused a fresh crisis between the Shāh and Qavām, and refused to resign when called upon to do so by the Prime Minister.<sup>6</sup>

On February 10, Qavām made a long speech in the Majlis, which amounted to an emphatic assertion of the Prime Minister's duty of administering the affairs of the country without interference by the Shāh. He stated in the course of his speech that the laws passed during Rīzā Shāh's regime had not been in accordance with the spirit

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6. On February 2, Bahrāmī had taken two of the new American advisers to an audience with the Shāh. On coming out of the room, he found Qavām waiting for him in a furious temper. The Prime Minister reproved him sharply for going direct to the Shāh without informing his chief, and told the Minister that he should resign. Bahrāmī replied very impertinently, saying he would not resign: it was for Qavām to resign. Qavām then went to the Shāh and offered to resign if Bahrāmī did not, but the Shāh refused to accept the resignation of either. The net result was further coolness between the Court and the Prime Minister. Then Qavām called upon his Ministers to resign and ten of them did so. For some days there was much intrigue among the Deputies of the Majlis by both Qavām and Court circles, but in spite of the hostility generally felt by the Deputies towards Qavām who had closed the Majlis after the bread riots of December (it reconvened December 20), they eventually opted for Qavām and gave him the vote of confidence. To mediate between the Shāh and Qavām over this dispute, both Bullard and Smirnov separately saw the Shāh. Then Bullard reported:  
 "The Shāh declared that he disliked dictatorship in principle and had no desire to interfere, but I am afraid that giving detailed orders which he now follows in the army might easily extend to other departments".  
 See Bullard to FO, Feb. 6, 1943. E 763/38/34, FO 371/35068.



of democracy and that the next Legislature might do well to revise even the constitution. His speech had little effect on the Deputies while the Shāh had been alarmed by the reference to a revision of the Constitution. Then Qavām went on with his attempts to complete his Cabinet, which currently consisted of only three Ministers. He hoped to persuade Suhailī, Hikmat, and Badir to join the Government. Bullard, who had met Qavām on the same day, reported:

"I have urged that Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Commerce (viz: Aḥmad 'Adl and 'Abdul Husain Hazhir) should be retained. By constantly consulting representative of His Majesty's Legation for some months they have acquired experience whose loss would be serious and they are both well disposed."7

They refused Qavām's proposal on February 12, and the weary Prime Minister attributed their refusal to Court intrigues.<sup>8</sup> But it seems more likely that they thought a Qavām Cabinet could not survive long and withdrew for that reason. In the meantime, the Russian Ambassador was so anxious to keep Qavām in power, that he sent a message to Tadayyun to the effect that the Soviet Government no longer had any objection to his joining the Government.<sup>9</sup> On February 13, the Majlis Deputies sent one of their colleagues named I'tibār to inform Qavām that he no longer

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7. Bullard to FO, Feb.10, 1943. E 844/38/34, FO 371/35068  
 8. Bullard to FO, Feb.13, 1943. E 888/38/34, Ibid.  
 9. Bullard to Eden, No.80. op.cit.



had any majority in the Majlis, and he resigned and retired to his estates at Lāhījān. Presumably not knowing about Qavām's relations with the Axis. Bullard could, still in early 1943, write about him as this: "... he was the first Prime Minister to come out definitely on the side of the Allies".<sup>10</sup>

Abrahamian argues that Britain and the United States opted for the Shāh because the rivalry between Qavām and the Shāh would divert the Allies' "meagre military resources from the vital responsibility of transporting war materials to the thankless task of preserving law and order".<sup>11</sup> He continues to imply that the army was behind the Shāh and both the British and Americans were aware of this, and the War Department in Washington had, therefore, instructed the American military advisers in Tihhrān to lend US support to the Shāh against Qavām.<sup>12</sup> This argument could partly be acceptable in that in the end Qavām found himself with practically no active supporter except the Soviet Ambassador, but his downfall was not only because of the withdrawal of British and American support as Abrahamian implies. He overlooks the role of the Majlis and Court intrigues, about which the British Military Attaché wrote:

10. Ibid.

11. E. Abrahamian, Iran Between Two Revolutions, p.183.

12. Ibid. Also see Vail Motter, The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia, pp.162, 436, 471

"His legitimate intention to establish Cabinet control over the army brought him into conflict with the Shah and the Chief of the General Staff, and they and other interested persons, made play with the irresponsible obstructiveness of a venal Majlis to undermine his position".<sup>13</sup>

Besides, the Army was not altogether behind the Shāh. For instance, the dispute between Razm Ārā, who represented younger officers and was the Chief of the General Staff at the time, and General Ahmadi, the Minister for War, highlighted the division within the army. While the latter represented the views of the Cabinet and insisted that the authority of his Ministry should be established over the Chief of the General Staff, the former executed the Shāh's orders without consulting the Minister. Moreover, the Shāh considered the co-operation between these two authorities as a threat to himself. In fact, as Bullard pointed out:

"It is unfortunate that the Shah has only one conception of the way to run an army viz. to appoint intriguers to all posts so that they may counter-balance each other".<sup>14</sup>

It must also be pointed out that the British or Americans did not support the Shāh for the mere fact that he was ambitious to create a larger army, and probably to run the

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13. MAIS, secret, No.7, Feb.10-16, 1943. E 1533/110/34, FO 371/35129.

14. Bullard to FO, Oct.26,1943. E 6515/38/34, FO 371/35075.

country by himself through the Army. They did their best not to give him encouragement on this score. For instance, when in 1942, the Shāh talked to Bullard about the creation of a bigger army and a sense of patriotism among his people, Bullard somewhat unfairly commented:

"We may sympathise with the Shah in his hopeless search for signs of nobility of character in the Persians but his big-army policy is inconvenient attitude since it tends to prevent or delay the non-belligerent co-operation that is useful to us".<sup>15</sup>

There again, when Qavām resigned the Shāh suggested that Sā'īd should be appointed to the post. He was an honest man with a good record of co-operation with the Allies, but Bullard did not approve this suggestion:

"The objection to Saed from our point of view is his weakness. If he were Prime Minister, the country would probably be run in fact by the Shah and the Chief of the General Staff".<sup>16</sup>

Qavām's successor was to be his predecessor, Suhailī who had been forced to resign some seven months before, after a short tenure of office during which he established an impressive record of ineptitude and corruption. He was selected by the Majlis by a considerable majority over other candidates:<sup>17</sup>

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15. Bullard to FO, Most secret, Sept. 29, 1942. E 5785/G, FO 371/31385.
  16. Bullard to FO, No. 168, Feb. 14, 1943. E 891/38/34, FO 371/35069.
  17. Kaihan, 25 Bahman, 1321 (Feb. 14, 1943). The Shāh had informed the Majlis that he would have preferred Sā'īd as Prime Minister, and asked them to think it over, but this had no effect. On February 15, Suhailī formed his Cabinet and introduced it to the Majlis two days later as this:

Continued....



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Footnote 17. continued.....

Suhailī	PM and Minister of the Interior (Tadayyun later took over the Interior.
Sā'id	Foreign Affairs
Husain Samī'ī	Without portfolio
Tadayyun	" " (Transferred to Food and Agriculture)
Amanullāh Ardalān	Health
Alī Aṣghar Hikmat	Justice
Badir	Commerce and Industry
Hazhīr	Roads and Communications
General Ahmadi	War
Alī Akbar Siyāsī	Education (Resigned in August)
Intizam	Posts and Telegraphs (PT)
Sālih	Finance (Omitted later, Bayāt took over)

Suhailī	72	votes
Sā'id	18	"
Tadayyun	8	"
Qayām	2	"
Ahī	1	"
Bahramī	1	"
Dr. Muṣaddiq	1	"
Blank vote	6	

The reason for the Deputies' choice was obvious. While in office Suhailī tried to buy them off by jobs and promises, and in any case he was amenable to influence whereas Sā'id was without ambition and sensible enough not to submit to blackmail. The Allies' representatives, though not impressed by the choice, did not object to his appointment. Bullard was convinced that Suhailī would co-operate with the Allies not from conviction but because they were going to win the war. It was the Soviet support of Suhailī which caused suspicions in some quarters that it was the policy of the Russians to produce disintegration and that for this purpose they found Suhailī an admirable Prime Minister. If that was their policy they had good cause for satisfaction. On the other hand, there was no need to look for anything so Machiavellian; the fact was that the autocratic methods of the previous years had discouraged the entry of capable and honest young men in administrative and political life, and it desperately needed a good few years before new men were trained to fill the vacuum which had been created.

The programme of Suhailī's Government on domestic problems was to deal with the supply of food, stabilisation of prices, improvement of the welfare of peasants; workers

and the Government employees. In fact the problems of food, prices and welfare of the lower classes were what the Allies, particularly the British, were believed to have caused by their occupation of the country. The anti-British feeling, as distinct from pro-Axis or anti-Ally, was much in evidence in 1943. For instance, in addition to famine conditions, a shortage of kerosene oil for some days had affected a large number of the poor of Tih̄rān and had aroused much bitterness against the AIOC and against the British, who were believed to control the means of transport. That the Iranians had to go short of their own oil was a useful and effective theme for propaganda.<sup>18</sup> The resulting increased unpopularity of the British among the lower classes was a matter of some concern to the Iranian Government and the Court, who were seeing in closer collaboration with the British the only defence against the spread of Russian influence.<sup>19</sup> They, too, probably blamed the British for failing to remedy, if not for having brought about, the hardships, which were driving the people towards revolution. Probably, for this reason, Suhailī inserted eye-catching phrases such as "welfare of peasants and workers" in his Government's programme. Did Suhailī fulfill this programme? Certainly not, but the impact

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18. Iran, "Nigāhī bi Matbū'āt", 18 Farvardīn, 1322 (April 18, 1943).

19. MAIS, secret, No.9, Feb 24-March 2, 1943. E 1395/110/34 FO 371/35129.



of those problems was reflected in his foreign policy. What he did in fact on domestic affairs was to strengthen his relations with the religious establishment. After Hikmat's resignation from the Ministry of Justice, the post was filled by the elderly Sayyid Muhsin Sadr (Sadr-al-Ashraf), an ex-mulla and shari'a judge, who looked much better in the turban, which he had worn for most of his life, than in a Pahlavi hat.<sup>20</sup>

The Shah and Suhaili were reported to have developed negotiations with mujtahids of Kerbela and Najaf, and one of them Hajj Aqa Husain Qumi made a pilgrimage from Najaf, where he had been living throughout Riza Shah's reign, to Mashhad in June 1943. After his return to Tihraan, Qumi made some demands, which were in fact the demands of the religious class in Iran as these: freedom for women to wear the veil, segregation of the sexes in schools, the restoration of the waqf funds to their original administrators, and political pressure on Ibn Saud with a view to securing his consent to the repair of certain tombs in Medina. The Suhaili Government replied to Qumi in a cabinet decree in which they stated that the police would no longer molest women in the matter of veil, and that mixed schools for boys and girls would be abolished, and gave him some satisfaction on other points as well. Later on, divinity classes were also introduced into the state school curriculum.<sup>21</sup>

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20. See Personalities, Appendix One. p.526.

21. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, Sept.15,1943  
E 5658/239/34, FO 371/35117

The main pretext for this movement for a return to religion seemed to be that it was necessary to counteract communist propaganda and the godless influence, which was threatening the country from the north. If this was the object of the Government and the Shāh, it failed to achieve that aim. Perhaps, Bullard saw the imprudence of this policy at the time when he wrote:

"It remains to be seen whether the disadvantages of a reactionary return to political jobbery by venal mullahs will not outweigh the advantages of an anti-Bolshevik drive with the slogan 'Back to Islam' ". 22

In pursuit of the original pattern of Iran's foreign policy, Suhailī offered to go to the United States to negotiate a commercial treaty, and offered to negotiate for granting an oil concession to American companies. This 'new' dimension in Iran's policy was not separate from both internal and external strife. The object was to find a 'third power' that would counter-balance, on one hand, the influence of communism which Britain was perhaps no longer able to do, and on the other, to counter-poise the pressure put on Iran by both Britain and the Soviet Union.

While in office Suhailī was confronted with two controversial problems; (a) the return of Sayyid Z̤ā-al-Din Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and (b) the elections of the Fourteenth Majlis, both of which were not completely free from foreign influence and interference.

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22. Bullard to Eden, confidential, No.271. June 29, 1943, E 3868/239/34, FO 371/35117

## II

1. The Return of Sayyid Żiyā

In his early career, Sayyid Żiyā was the bomb-maker on the committee known as the Jahangīr Committee. Then he entered into politics and his editorship of the newspaper Ra'ḍ gave him an insight into local political affairs. He became a member of one of Vuṣūq-al-Daula's cabinets, and at that time tried to help the passage through the Majlis of the abortive Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919. When he rose to power, however, things had significantly changed: the British troops were evacuating the country, and the menace of the Bolsheviks was great. He conceived then that Iran's hope of survival lay in collaboration with the British. But he was forced to work with the northern neighbour, and the strictures passed on his actions by Lord Curzon were unfair. Curzon could not forgive him for negotiating the treaty of 1921 with Russia, nor with accepting the first Bolshevik envoy, Rothstein. But all these measures were taken, having Iran's interests in view. Nor could Curzon ever forget that the Sayyid had not carried out the 1919 treaty, though Norman and other local advisers saw that it was impossible to carry on with it. When Sayyid Żiyā embarked on taking steps to combat oppression and corruption, the Foreign Office seemed more concerned with interceding for the release of Prince Fīrūz (Nusrat-al-Daula) who was reputed corrupt than with helping



him with a constructive policy.<sup>23</sup> After the advent of Riżā Khān, the Sayyid was forced to leave the country, and after spending some years in Europe, he settled down in Palestine.

It was in the early days of August 1941, before the occupation of Iran, that the British Government seemed to have taken initiatives to establish contacts with the Sayyid. The Foreign Office reported:

"Havard saw Sayid Zia on 9th August at his farm near Gaza. He gathered during a lengthy conversation that Sayid if called upon to return to Persia as Prime Minister to work for his country would reluctantly give up his farm and go provided that he was assured of success. Sayid Zia is convinced that success could only be achieved if the Shah would agree at once to employ British or American advisers especially in Finance and Security Departments with the necessary powers for himself and wholehearted backing of the Shah".<sup>24</sup>

The chaotic situation and collapse of the administration which resulted from the occupation, and the ever increasing demands of the occupying forces were to induce in Iranian statesmen a reluctance to accept or remain in office. Sensing this Bullard asked the Foreign Office in early September 1941 to find out whether the Sayyid would be likely to be of use if he was urged to return. But Bullard also emphasized: "It would in the meantime be necessary not to hold out any hopes to him".<sup>25</sup>

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23. Brit. Legation to FO, (Notes on Sayyid Zia Tabata'i), secret, Oct. 6, 1942. E 6197/G, FO 371/31400. Also see Personalities, Appendix One. An account of Zia's activities before the Coup was unfavourably given by 'Alī Dashtī, "Aga-yi Sayyid Ziyā-al-Din Mudiri Ra'd", the Shafaq-i Surkh, Nos 137 & 138 1302 (1924).
24. High Commissioner, Palestine (Sir H. MacMichael) to SOS for the Colonies (to FO), Most secret, Sept. 8, 1941. E 5508, FO 371/27213.
25. Bullard to FO, secret, Sept. 4, 1941. E 5350, FO 371/27213.

When some degree of stability however prevailed with the premiership of Furūghī, and due to the fact that there was no demand for Sayyid Zīyā in those days, Bullard, repeatedly, warned the Foreign Office of the undesirability of returning the Sayyid to Iran. This did not mean that either the British Legation in Tihhrān or the Foreign Office put aside the question for ever, they left it dormant for some months. In July 1942, when the Suhailī Government was on the verge of collapse, the Legation once again reconsidered the Sayyid as a possible successor to Suhailī, but this time it was the Foreign Office which did not receive the suggestion with great enthusiasm:

"....of the possible successors mentioned by Mr. Holman, Zia-ed-Din Tabatabai is, I imagined, ruled out because both the Shah and the Soviet Ambassador are opposed to his return to power (E 2887). There is also no reason to suppose that he wishes to return to Persia....

For the present there seems no need for us to decide who would be the most suitable successor to Soheily". 26

The Shāh's opposition to the return of the Sayyid stemmed from the fear that he might try to take his revenge on the Shāh, whose father had forced him to exile. The Russians opposed the Sayyid because they regarded him as a British tool.

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26. Minute by Pink (FO) on Holman, July 9, 1942.  
E 4095/14/34, FO 371/31385.



In early Autumn of 1942 the Germans seemed to be approaching the Caucasus, German agents were still active in Iran, and Qavām appeared to be difficult to handle. Therefore, the Foreign Office agreed to Bullard's suggestion of sending Mr. Trott, the Oriental Secretary of the Legation, to Palestine to ascertain the Sayyid's views on his return to Iran. Mr. Trott met the Sayyid in Gaza on September 24, 1942. Bullard wrote to the Foreign Office:

"I think that you will agree with me that this interview has served a most useful purpose, in that it has helped to clear our minds as to the desirability of making use of SEYYID ZIA TABATABAI. if the occasion arises. As far as I can see, he may prove a satisfactory candidate as Prime Minister, we cannot proceed any further in the matter of his return unless or until Qavam-es-Saltaneh is unable to continue to our satisfaction".<sup>27</sup>

During the interview the Sayyid had stated that he could not go back to Iran as less than Prime Minister, as he was sure that he would not be able to work under another chief. He was aware of the Russian hostility towards him, but it did not worry him. As for the Shāh, he had never met him but he would work with him if necessary. The Sayyid seemed very concerned about the German approach to the Caucasus. He thought that some good could be done by guerillas, and it might be possible for him to arrange a system of guerillas by means of a directing committee working outside the country.

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27. Bullard to Eden, secret, Oct. 6, 1942. E 6197/G, FO 371/31400.



Trott wrote:

"I then told him of my own experience with the levies which we raised in the Khalkhal district in the last war: how they had all run away directly the Turks began to attack them. SEYYID ZIA laughed and said that I was right about levies: but he would propose to work through villagers, and with the help of the Armenians, with whom he had worked a great deal in the past. Persons like Dr. Aghayan were of little use: the Dashnak-Sakantz party were the only ones who would help, and he thought he could do a great deal through 'X'". 28

Trott concluded as this:

"....that SEYYID ZIA was still a patriotic Persian, anxious to serve his country: and also firmly attached to the idea that his country must work with the British in every possible way". 29

In actual fact the Sayyid was never regarded as patriotic by his fellow Iranians. His advocacy of the abortive treaty of 1919 has discredited him in the eyes of the Iranians. If there appeared to be some degree of support for his return, it was only due to desperation and a belief that any change must be for better.

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28. Trott's interview with Sayyid Zia. Ibid, p.183. Sayyid Zia's relations with the Dashnaks goes back to the years before the Coup of 1921. They had organized a secret committee called the 'Kumita-yi Ahan', in Tihrān, which later played a role in the Coup. The 'X' has not been identified in the document but it is presumably referring to Prince Muẓaffar Fīrūz
29. Ibid. p.184

In January 1943, the Iqdām published an article, giving<sup>30</sup> the account of Prince Muẓaffar Fīrūz's interview with the Sayyid in Palestine. The interview was a blatant piece of electioneering, and it fell flat. Public opinion regarded it as an obvious attempt to win over the Russians, the Majlis, and the Shāh.<sup>31</sup> The public held the British responsible for the interview, whereas in actual fact, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had requested the British Legation for a diplomatic visa for Fīrūz for Palestine. The Court tried to persuade the Legation to cancel his visa, but the Legation hinted to the Shāh's emissary that his interference was illegitimate. Then the Court put pressure on the Ministry to ask the Legation to cancel the visa but by that time Fīrūz had left the country.<sup>32</sup>

The article did not, however, evoke much popular enthusiasm, but a campaign in favour of Sayyid Zīyā's return began to gain momentum from the middle of February, no doubt, aided by a group of prominent persons such as Muẓaffar Fīrūz,

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30. Muẓaffar Fīrūz is the son of Prince Nusrat-al-Daula, who was killed by Riẓā Shāh's police, the nephew of Dr. Muṣaddiq, and the editor of the Iqdām. Later on, he ceased his relations with the Sayyid, and joined to the latter's opponents, and became the Parliamentary Secretary in Qavām's cabinet, 1945-6. He has currently organized a movement based in Paris for the restoration of the Qājars.

31. Iqdām, 8 Bahman 1321 (Jan. 28, 1943). In the interview the Sayyid made a strong effort to conciliate the Russians: "...the language, ideology, and character of Lenin and leaders of the Russian Revolution were not Iranian, but what they gave and did for Iran had not been done by no Iranian king or leader; no Iranian Minister, no Majlis Deputy, and no writer".

32. Bullard to Eden, Feb. 1, 1943. E 969, FO 371/35069.



Pūr Riżā (Fīrūz's family lawyer), Niqābat, 'Alā, Ibtihāj, and some Majlis Deputies. At the same time opposition to his return was growing among people like General Ahmadi, a number of Majlis Deputies, the American Legation, and the Russian Embassy. The Americans opposed the Sayyid because of his attacks on them in his paper, the Ra'd, in the past. They too regarded him as a British tool.<sup>33</sup> Besides, the American policy, in contrast with the British, was to lend support to educated honest young men, so they claimed. The Russians, not flattered by the article, strongly objected the Sayyid because of his alleged reactionary tendencies, his reputation as a British tool, and his connection with the Coup. Their sentiment and opposition were reflected in the Tūda Party organ, the Rahbar, which came out strongly against the Sayyid. Other papers also attacked the Sayyid. The Mihr-i Irān, which had previously published series of articles entitled, "Muqadamāt-i Kūditā-yi 1299", by Husain Makkī,<sup>34</sup> the historian and veteran of the oil nationalization era, the whole purpose of which was to imply that Sayyid Zīyā had been too obsequious to the British, now renewed its attacks. Meanwhile, the position taken by the British Legation was that it was for the Iranians to bring him back if they wanted.<sup>35</sup>

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33. SOS(Hull) to the Minister in Iran (Dreyfus), Feb. 11, 1943 US.R.R., vol. IV, 1943. p. 330.

34. Mihr-i Irān, 17-20 Mihr, 1321 (Oct. 9-12, 1942).

35. Bullard to FO, No. 168, Feb. 14, 1943. E 891/38/34, FO 371/35069



In practice, the Legation seemed to be rather flexible with regard to their position. In March, some Majlis Deputies and "certain elements" were given transit visas to Palestine, probably with the view of encouraging them to get in touch with the Sayyid. But Bullard discounted such an intention:

"It would of course be highly undesirable for this Legation to be involved in any way in this affair and thus lay itself open to the possibility of accusation of intrigue by the Prime Minister. At the same time it is most important not to alienate the sympathies of Zia if there is likelihood of his return to office. I am therefore adopting non-committal attitude but at the same time keeping a close watch on developments".<sup>36</sup>

The campaign in favour of the return of Sayyid Ẓīyā was accompanied by a manifesto circulated in Tihrān on June 14. This manifesto had been arranged by an elderly Deputy, Sayyid Kāẓim Yazdī, of the Hizb-i Vatan (the Fatherland Party), which comprised some of the advocates of the Sayyid. The manifesto claimed that at the invitation of the Vatan Party a conference of parties had been held at a place outside the town on June 9, 1943, and representatives of the following parties attended: Vatan, Taraqikhāhān va Kishāvarzān (Progressives and Cultivators), Dihqānān (Peasants), Vahdat (Union) Ranjbarān (Toilers), Iqtisād-i Āzād (Free Economy),

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36. Bullard to FO, No.380, April 13, 1943. E 1949/38/34, FO 371/35070.

Ittiḥādīa-yi Pishavarān-i Iran (Union of Artisans of Iran), Jam'iyat-i Ra'd (Thunder Society), representatives of the Armenians, the Zoroastrians, and the Student's Council. Apart from the Vatan Party, the other groups were either unknown or of very little importance. The manifesto, however, stated that these groups had decided to telegraph to Zīyā that he ought to assume the direction of the affairs of Iran, and to publish a programme. Because they believed that the only person possessing the necessary qualifications was the Sayyid.<sup>37</sup>

In August, Sayyid Zīyā informed his friends in Iran that he was shortly returning to Iran. Having received the news of his return, the American Minister reported:

"British Minister confirms this fact but denies any British comlicity therein. To prove this point, he states that he has refused to assist Taba tabai to obtain seat in plane from Palestine".

Dreyfus then concluded:

"Notwithstanding this denial I have every reason to believe British have at least encouraged him,...Since both Shah and Russian Ambassador have told me they are very much opposed to Tabatabai, our wisest course for the moment may be to permit them to offer any resistance they desire and ourselves await developments".<sup>38</sup>

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37. For English translation of the manifesto see Bullard to FO, June 18, 1943. E 3793/38/34, FO 371/35073.

38. Dreyfus to SOS, Aug. 8, 1943. US.F.R., vol. IV, 1943, p. 374.

From the middle of August, the campaign against the Sayyid was increasingly intensified. The Tūda press directed their bitter attacks against him. The Shāh went so far as to meet one of the leaders of the Tūda Party and his old foe, Qavām<sup>39</sup>, against whom the Shāh had only recently made violent accusations to Dreyfus, declaring that Qavām was maintaining a "gang of cut-throats" and was "only awaiting the return of the Soviet Ambassador to execute some unfriendly, but desperate design".<sup>40</sup> These meetings were reported to have been held to seek Russian support for the Shāh as the Party and Qavām were both supposed to enjoy Russian blessing.

Sayyid Zīā arrived in Tihṛān on October 1, 1943, after an absence of over twenty years. His reception, as Professor Elwell-Sutton pointed out, was mixed. "Some groups welcomed him with almost Messianic fervour; others, including the Tudeh Party, were equally violent in attacking him as fascist and a reactionary".<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Suhailī saw in the conflict between the two parties a hope of maintaining his position, and in order to embitter the struggle he ordered the release of three Soviet-supported papers which could be relied upon to attack the Sayyid.

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39. MAIS, secret, No.36, Aug.31-Sept.6,1943. E 5577/110/34, FO 371/35130.

40. Bullard to FO, No.842, July 31,1943. E 4484/38/34, FO 371/35073.

41. L.P.Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran",p.51.



The popular belief was, however, that the British were responsible for his return. At any rate, they were going to be blamed for it, regardless of whether his return was under British auspices or due to his own decision. Perhaps, at some point, it could be said that the Sayyid could have best served British interests by remaining in Palestine.

Having returned, Sayyid Zīā appeared to have realized that the time was not opportune to bid for premiership, as its outcome would have been a more open and intensified struggle for ascendancy by the Russians in Iran. He therefore opted for Parliament, whose elections were partly in progress.

### III

#### II. The Fourteenth Majlis Elections

Shortly after his succession to premiership, Suhailī was faced with the question of the elections for the Fourteenth Majlis, which turned to be, to borrow Abrahamian's words, "the most prolonged, the most competitive, and the most meaningful of all elections in modern Iran".<sup>42</sup> Suhailī had, on the surface, a reason to postpone the elections until after the war on the grounds that foreign troops were still occupying

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42. Abrahamian, op.cit. p.186.

most parts of the country, and that the elections could hardly be carried out without foreign interference in occupied zones. This was partly true, but it was also the fear of the Tūda Party, which had sobered Suhailī and a group of Majlis Deputies, and led them to such reasoning.

From late 1942, the wealthier classes began to take an anxious interest in the Tūda Party behind whose increasing activities they professed to see Soviet agents. It was true that except for Isfahān which was chiefly a manufacturing town, it was in the Russian zone that the party was most active, but the published programme of the Tabrīz and Qazvīn branches, which had appeared in early 1943, were not communist but highly constitutional, and their specific demands for reform were mild in comparison with conditions of the poorer classes. There was nothing apparent to justify the accusation that the party was directly run by Russia, but the situation was such that it afforded a golden opportunity for the Soviet Union to exploit the party in the interests of their long term policy in Iran. Suhailī did not, however, proceed with the idea of postponing the elections, on the grounds that the Soviet Embassy might object to it. Bullard had, in fact, favoured the postponement; his stand had been undoubtedly dictated, like Suhailī, by the fear of increase in the Soviet influence in Iran, to the detriment of long term British interests. When informed of Suhailī's decision, Bullard asked the Foreign Office for instructions:

"The probability that elections will be held this year faces His Majesty's Legation with a delicate problem. It is natural to suppose that the Soviet authorities will use their influence in their zone to secure the election of candidates more or less subservient to their views, and the question arises how we can counter-balance this by influencing the elections ourselves in other parts of Persia without giving cause for complaint to our Soviet Allies or cause for misunderstanding to the Americans".<sup>43</sup>

The American view was that "democratic processes should continue in spite of the fact that interests of privileged Iranian classes or of foreign powers" might suffer.<sup>44</sup>

The Foreign Office maintained a similar view to that of the Americans that the elections should be held, but for different reasons. The Foreign Office had long been anxious to see the Thirteenth Majlis dissolved. Therefore, they would not appreciate any arrangement whereby the Deputies could retain their seats until the end of the war:

"We have nothing to hope for from the present assembly who have consistently done their best to embarrass and blackmail us. If they knew that they would not be sent packing whatever they did, the deputies could surely be relied upon to use this opportunity to curry favour amongst our enemies by blocking every attempt by the Government to cooperate with us".<sup>45</sup>

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43. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, No.139, March 6, 1943. E 2453/239/34, FO 371/35117.

44. Dreyfus to SOS, March 20, 1943, US.F.R., vol.IV, 1943, p.344.

45. FO to Bullard, March 15, 1943. E 1463/38/34, FO 371/35070.



The Foreign Office viewed the forthcoming elections not only as harmless but advantageous in that the elections could scarcely result in a 'worse' bunch of deputies than those of the Thirteenth Majlis. Besides, some deputies from the Tūda Party would not have prejudiced British interests. "Indeed from long term point of view", asked the Foreign Office, "does not the danger of a violent swing over increase the longer the present gang of corrupt and selfish landlords remain in control?".<sup>46</sup> And, indeed, some Tūda deputies in the next Majlis might have made the majority, comprised of "corrupt and selfish landlords", become more dependent on the British for their protection.

By further instructions, Bullard was directed to use his influence to prevent the election of elements directly associated with the Axis. But this should be carefully implemented, if it became known, to be defensible.<sup>47</sup> So, Bullard sent a guidance to British consuls in Iran in June as thus:

"Members of Tuda Party and other groups of the left, provided that they are not irresponsible, may in many cases be serving the best interest of their country and be far preferable to present reactionary and obstructive elements in the Majlis and it is not in our interest that such candidates should be prevented from standing at elections simply because they hold left views. On the contrary candidates of good

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46. Ibid.

47. FO to Bullard, No, 267, March 22, 1943. E. 1561/38/34, FO 371/35070.

character with liberal and progressive ideas who are likely to promote reforms should be encouraged without too close attention to electoral programmes which in this country are apt to be vague and unstable".<sup>48</sup>

As can be seen, British "interference" was, contrary to the popular belief, limited to giving encouragement to the "best elements" to come forward, and that the object was not to favour a pro-British as opposed to pro-Russian candidate. Finally Bullard assured the Foreign Office that the Legation would endeavour to help to secure a better Majlis than the present one, but he remarked:

"....it would be a mistake to leave you with the impression that any of us here are optimistic about the usefulness of democratic institutions in this country. It seems extremely likely that once the foreign troops have gone, some form of dictatorship, however well disguised, will be set up, doubtless with the army as a basis".<sup>49</sup>

In short, democratic institutions ask too much of the Iranians.

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- 48. Bullard to British Consuls, Circular No.7, June 6, 1943, E 3486/38/34, FO 371/35071.
  - 49. Bullard to Baxter (FO), secret, June 7, 1943. E 3492, FO 371/35071.

## IV

The Royal Rescript announcing the coming elections for the Fourteenth Majlis was duly promulgated on June 23, and two months after that the elections were due to commence. In Tih<sup>r</sup>ān and to a lesser degree in the provinces canvassing had already begun. Over eight hundred candidates were competing for 136 seats, and the Shāh was reported to be creating an organization to ensure the return to Tih<sup>r</sup>ān of candidates of his choice, and it was alleged that the Chief of Staff was spending the leave given to him from his military duties in furthering the Shāh's election plans.<sup>50</sup> He did not appear to have been completely successful in the end. Too many antagonistic political forces, the Majlis Deputies, the Prime Minister, mullas, all seemed to be interesting themselves in the struggle for the elections.

The picture of the electoral activity was a confused one, and appeared characteristic of an irresponsible reaction after a period of dictatorship. There were a variety of more or less insignificant so-called political parties, but hardly any with the organisation, discipline, and serious aims (except the Tūda Party) of a political party in the Western sense. Moreover, some of these parties appeared to be little

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50. MAIS, secret, No.26, June 22-28, 1943. E 3988/110/34, FO 371/35129.



more than loose associations for the sole purpose of supporting a particular candidate, and disappeared when the elections finished. There were a limited number of parties which seemed to be more than a collection of a few friends with some pompous label. The majority of these parties did not have clear-cut programmes, or even any programme at all; instead, personalities tended to count more than programmes.

A small number of candidates argued for national regeneration of the dilapidated society which the majority were divided into two broad groups; those commonly known as reactionary and those with a tendency to the left. In other words, the campaign was between those who had and those who had not. Numerous candidates had blossomed freely, since the law required no deposit. The parties which seemed to be involved, were these:

Hizb-i Tūda -yi Irān ( The Party of the Masses)<sup>51</sup>

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51. There is sufficient literature on the Tūda Party available in both Persian and English. The following works give accounts of the Party's origin, developments, structure, and activities:  
 G. Lenczowski, The communist Movement in Iran, pp 29-45  
 Sepehr Zabih's book under the same title. S.J.V. Courtois, "The Tudeh Party", pp 14-22. L.P.Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran", op.cit. A very sympathetic view on the party is given by Reza Shashahani, "The Background of the Iranian Affair", pp.113-31. A liberal interpretation of the Party's programme is given by Ahmad Qāsimī, Hizb-i Tūda-yi Iran chimiguyad va chi mikhahad? These two following articles on Iran's political parties during the period 1941-47 also discuss at some length about the Tūda Party, see Franciszek Machalski, "Political Parties in Iran in the years 1941-46".pp.135-170, and Giovanni D'Erme, "I Partiti Politici In Persia Dal 1941 Al 1944". pp. 213-235.

was reported to have, on the eve of the Elections, eight thousand members in Tih̄rān, of whom some twenty to twenty-five were active party workers, and a total nominal roll of 60-65000 was claimed for the whole country. In Tabrīz, Riẓā'iya, Ardabīl, Qazvīn, Chālūs, Shāhī, Mashhad, and Isfahān, the party had a few thousand sympathizers in each town, with four to seven active party organisers. Small cells (Huza) existed in Yazd and Shīrāz. In Isfahān the party had organised a Worker's Union (Shurā-yi Markazī-yi Ittiḥādīa-yi Kārgarān-i Isfahān) under the leadership of Fidākār who was later elected to the Majlis with the help of Sārim-al-Daula, the most influential man in Isfahān upon Bullard's recommendation.<sup>52</sup> The Isfahān Worker's Union had a rival in Tih̄rān and the north, called the Union of the Workers of Iran (Ittiḥādīa-yi Kārgarān-i Irān), whose organ was the paper Gītī. A noticeable feature, however, of the Party Organisation was that its leaders included intellectuals, among whom Doctors Bahrāmī, a physician educated from Berlin University, and Yazdī, a professor and physician educated from the same university, previously active in the Jangalī movement, were prominent. Several of its candidates had suffered imprisonment during Riẓā Shāh's reign for their convictions. The party had sponsored thirty-nine

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52. Bullard to Baxter, June 7, 1943. op.cit.



candidates for the Majlis elections, but only eight found their way through. In Tabriz the Party leader was 'Alī Amīrk̲h̲īzī and the group had the support of Muḥammad 'Alī Ak̲h̲bārī, the editor of the paper Kirdār va Guftār, which had been ceased to appear for the lack of funds.

Hizb-i Millat (The Nation Party) was of liberal complexion. It was reported to have about two to three hundred members, mostly older men, under the leadership of Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who was elected from Tih̲r̲ān with the second highest poll to Dr. Muṣaddiq.

Hizb-i Hamrāhān (The Comrade Party) was comprised of a group of younger intelligentsia under the leadership of Muṣṭafā Fātiḥ, an employee of the AIOC. Fātiḥ was more of a theorist than a practical man. His British connection had given rise to a popular belief that he enjoyed British support. After leaving the co-editorship of the paper Mardum with the Tūda Party in a short-lived front called Anti-Fascists society, Fātiḥ founded his own paper Imrūz va Fardā. The party had a small membership. Fātiḥ attempted to organise a popular front composed of the Tūda Party, his own party, and the Millat party. Although the Hamrāhān and Millat parties were ready to co-operate fully, the only agreement reached with the Tūda was that they would not oppose each other's candidates. The Soviet Embassy were opposed to the Hamrāhān, though whether this was because Muṣṭafā Fātiḥ was regarded as pro-British, or because he was an arm-chair socialist, is not known. After



the conclusion of the elections, a number of party members led by Shahīdzāda left the Party and set up a new socialist party called Hizb-i Susiyālist-i Iran, with the Imrūz va Fardā as its organ. Fātiḥ therefore started a new paper called Shamʿas the Hamrāhān organ. The party gradually disintegrated. In later years Fātiḥ wrote a Marxist interpretation of the history of Iranian oil—Panjāh sal Naft-i Iran ( Fifty years of Iranian Oil).

Hizb-i Irān-i Javān (The Young Iran Party) was founded around 1930 and was originally an association of friends. It was headed by Dr. ʿAlī Akbar Siyāsī, the Minister of Education, and was supported mainly by graduates of the Faculty of Law of Tihrān University. Suhailī, the Prime Minister, had connections with this group, if he was not an actual member. Dr. Musharaf Nafīsī was an official party candidate. This party had about 150 members, with ten candidates.

Hizb-i Mihan Parastān (The Patriots Party) was alleged to be subsidized by the Shāh.<sup>53</sup> Its leader was Muḥammad ʿAlī Jalālī, the editor of the paper bearing the Party's name, but an engineer named Khalīlī was also mentioned as its leader. ʿAbbās Masʿūdī was the official candidate of this party. Its membership was insignificant.

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53. British Legation to FO, Aug. 7, 1943. FO 371/35074.

Hizb-i 'Adālāt (The Justice Party)'s leading figure was the Deputy 'Alī Dashtī, a nationalist with an inclination to the Right. In his earlier years, he edited the paper Shafaq-i Surkh, and in later years he wrote many excellent books, among which his "Damī bā Khayyām" (In search of Omar Kahayyam) has been translated into English.<sup>54</sup> The sole purpose of the Party was to serve Dashtī's own ambitions and those of his friends. The Party was said to number about four hundred, and among the adherents were Jamāl Imāmī (the son of the Tih-rān Imām Jum'ā), Abulqāsim Amīnī, Ibrāhīm Khaja Nūrī, and Dr. Jamshīd A'lam.

The leader of the Hizb-i Ittihadī-i Millī (National Union Party) was known to be Bayāt, who was appointed as Minister of Finance in the place of Allāhyār Sālih. Among prominent members were the Deputies Dr. Malikzāda, Hashimī, and Mirāt Isfandiyārī. Others included Farajullāh Bahrāmī (Dabīr A'zam), Dr. Khal'atbarī, and Dr. Sajjādī. The party numbered about six hundred members, and had some influence in the Thirteenth Majlis, but apparently little aim other than place-seeking for the new one.

The Milliyyūn was a small group of some sixty officials, doctors, and businessmen, supporting the candidature of Dr. Nasrullāh Vazīrī.

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54. Translated by L.P. Elwell-Sutton. The other books of Dashtī on Iranian classic literature are Qalamruv-i Sa'dī, and Naqshī az Hāfiz.

The Ra'ḍ (Thunder) and Vatan (Fatherland), were both led by Muzaffar Fīrūz, and carried out propaganda for Sayyid Zīā who was elected from Yazd.

The Yārān (Friends) was a small group headed by Khalīlī, the editor of the Iqdām. Sayyid Zia was also supported by this group.

The Ta'āvun (Co-operation) was also a small group of friends with a small membership, not exceeding four hundred. The leading figures of this group were the Deputy Niqābat, and Dr. 'Abduh of the Ministry of Justice, both of whom were elected from Khurramshahr and Tihrān respectively.

The Paikār (Combat) was an anti-Ally party with a small membership. The leading figure of this party was Khusrau Iqbāl, a lawyer, who in June 1943 joined the paper Iran-i Mā. He formerly published another paper called Nabard. This party supported the candidature of Iqbāl, who was never elected.

A party with the same name was active in Mashhad which opposed the Tūda Party there. It is not known whether there was a connection between them.

The Istiqlāl (Independence)'s membership was very small. It was led by 'Abdulqadīr Āzād, the editor of the paper of the same name.

The Physicians' Association was a group of doctors, who supported the candidature of Dr. Āshtiānī, a son-in-law of Vusūq-al-Daula, who was not, however, elected.



The candidates of the Chamber of Commerce (Uṭāq-i Bāzargānī) and industrialist interests campaigned individually. 'Alī Vakīlī, the president of the chamber, Nikpūr, Kahbud Isfandīyārī, Kharāzī, Bātmanqilīj, Shahāb Khusravānī, and Muḥammad Khusraushāhī were active candidates of this category.

A number of pro-German personalities were active in electoral campaign. The group centred around Dr. Matīn Daftarī and Sayyid Abulqāsim Kāshānī,<sup>55</sup> the latter of whom was elected to the Majlis but because of his arrest by the British he could not take his seat. Matīn Daftarī did not represent any political party, but enjoyed the support of influential families such as his father-in-law, Dr. Muṣaddīq, and Dr. Kīyā, some members of the Law Faculty and of the Ministry of Justice, and certain wealthy merchants. He did not, however, stand for the elections.

The Shāh was anxious to see young progressive individuals in the Majlis. In line with this policy, a group called Irān-i Nau was formed and headed by Miṣbāḥzāda, the Director of the Press and Propaganda Department and the owner of the Kaihān. Miṣbāḥzāda was a friend of the Shāh, and was active in conjunction with Husain Fardūst, an officer at the Court and a close friend of the Shāh.<sup>56</sup> The candidates of this group were 'Abbās Mas'udī (also of the Mihan Parastān), and Rahnamā.

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55. British Legation to FO, August 7, 1943. op.cit.

56. Ibid. p.107.

The group numbered about three hundred and carried out propaganda chiefly among the younger generation, including University members.

The Hizb-i Nihzat-i Milli (National Movement) had emerged in Isfahān with the backing of the industrialist opposed to the local Tūda union. The formation was often imputed to the Shāh, and the Mišbāhzāda was also actively concerned in this party. Its organ was the Āzādīgān (Free Men).

In Tabrīz, the Hizb-i Irān-i Bidār whose activities were explained in the previous chapter, the Tūda branch, the Āzādīkhāhān, the Labour Union were active during the elections. The Āzādīkhāhān was a liberal party led by the old agitator, 'Alī Aṣghar Sartīpzāda, who for a brief period was, or claimed to be the leader of the Tūda branch in Tabrīz until displaced by Amīr Khīzī. Born in Tabrīz about 1884, Sartīpzāda was a friend and supporter of Taqīzāda during the Constitutional Revolution. His reputation in those days was that of a fire-eating revolutionary, a member of the Democrat Party. In the days of Riżā Shāh, he was one of the Tabrīz malcontent and opposed the Shāh; he became known for his sympathy with the Russians, and though he was never imprisoned he was always under some kind of surveillance from the police. When Riżā Shāh abdicated it was thought that the Soviets would reward Sartīpzāda for his pro-Soviet leanings, but then it appeared that he was more of a nationalist than a pro-Soviet,



and the Russians were offended. He had the support of the paper Sahand, whose editor, Ḥabīb Āqāzāda, was still a fugitive in Tih̄rān, having been markedly pro-German. The paper appeared then to advocate democracy.<sup>57</sup>

The labour union of Tabrīz was led by Muṭallib Laṭīfī. There was a strong Caucasian tinge about this group. They seemed to be supporting Russian nominees.<sup>58</sup>

A detailed study of the political parties during the election period is beyond the scope of this study. The above account seemed essential in order to present the situation of the elections at their inception, with those starter parties and groups. During the campaign many more cropped up. By the end of the elctions in 1944, the number of parties had reached to forty-two.<sup>59</sup> It seemed that this confusing and complicated post-Riẓā Shāh electoral picture

would create a Majlis filled with, as the British Legation commented, " the loud-voiced, the self-seeking, and the plausible".<sup>60</sup>

Apart from the political parties, the Court, Government, local magnates, and the Allies were all active in influencing the elections. But they were only partially successful in that,

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57. British Legation to FO, (Tabrīz Diary), May 27, 1944. E 3219/94/34, FO 371/40178.

58. Bullard to FO, August 13, 1943. E 4766/38/34, FO 371/35075.

59. For the list of political parties, groups, and Trade Unions see Appendix Four. Three articles by Machalski, Elwell-Sutton, and D'Erme, op. cit. discuss Iran's political parties between 1941 and 1947.

60. British Legation to FO, August 7, 1943. op. cit.



and none could gain overall control over the results. For instance, Suhailī and his Interior Minister Tadayyun, could only manipulate the votes coming out from the ballot boxes.<sup>61</sup> Foreign interference, particularly from the Russians, appeared to have been of little effect, as Bullard remarked in November 1943 "The bogey of Russian intervention in the elections in the north has proved to be very small one".<sup>62</sup> Even the Russians acquiesced in the election of Abulqāsim Amīnī, a member of a wealthy family, from Rasht, who when in Government service was known to be guilty of speculation, and whose paper Umīd published severe criticism of Dr. Millspaugh. In Sarāb too, the Russians did not prevent the election of the wealthy landowner, Prince Muhammad Valī Farmanfarma'iyan, who was elected almost unanimously despite the intense campaign of his rival, a Russian nominee. Finally, The Foreign Office commented: "it is interesting that, in spite of all forebodings and the Cassandra-like prophecies of the Americans, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and a host of others, the Russians have exerted little influence in the voting in their zone".<sup>63</sup>

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61. For a detailed account of the interference of Suhailī and Tadayyun in the elections see Muzākīrāt-i Majlis, Daura-yi Chahārdahum, 10 Farvardīn 1323 (March 30, 1944). Farrukh accused Suhailī and Tadayyun of "pārtībāzī" (nepotism) in the elections; "I'lam-i jurm bar 'Alaih-i Suhailī va Tadayyun", in Kai Ustuvān, Siyāsāt-i Muvāzana -yi Manfī, vol. I, pp. 371-404.

62. Bullard to Eden, Confidential, No. 462, Nov. 23, 1943. E 7569/239/34, FO 371/35117.

63. Minute on Bullard. Ibid.

Nonetheless, the Shāh was not satisfied with the results. He had planned to have the elections annulled and fresh elections conducted under a new Prime Minister. He revealed his plan to Bullard:

"He spoke of the large sums spent on voting and interference by officials and by the Russians. I said that this was true but perhaps inevitable at Persia's stage of political development and the only alternative was probably a Majlis filled almost entirely with local landowners. I asked the Shah whether he thought that a Majlis elected as he proposed would differ greatly from the one now being elected. His reply was that at least the new deputies would be representative of the people. I fear that what the Shah wants is not better but subservient deputies. We have an example of this at Bandar Abbas where he is trying to force on the electors a particularly unpleasant supporter of his from outside at the expenses of a local candidate. There is good reason to think that the Shah is almost hysterically afraid of Seyed Zia and would go to great lengths to exclude him from the Majlis but naturally he did not say this to me". 64

The paragon, who would have been designated as Prime Minister to carry out the fresh elections, was Dr. Muṣaddiq, who could claim respect for having opposed Riżā Shāh and was at the head of the poll in Tihrān as the most popular candidate. Bullard did not approve the plan, but left the

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64. Bullard to FO, No.71, Jan.20, 1944.  
E 493/189/34, FO 371/40186.



decision to the Shāh. At any rate, the British Minister apparently saw some disadvantage if Muṣaddiq were to become Prime Minister in that he was "touchy and nationalistic".<sup>65</sup> Muṣaddiq is often painted in the west as being a demagogue, narrow-minded, a wind bag, xenophobic aristocrat, whereas in actual fact, his principles of political liberalism, parliamentarism, and anti-militarism were more compatible with those of the educated middle class of the West than of the conservative landowning oligarchy.

The Shāh eventually abandoned his plan and agreed to the opening of the Majlis. His change of plan was partly due to Dr. Muṣaddiq's terms, who wanted to hold a referendum in order to secure the authority to amend the electoral law, and the Shāh was against this. The Foreign Office seemed relieved that the Shāh had dropped his plan.<sup>66</sup> They probably knew that they would have been blamed, if the Shāh had gone on with his plan. In accordance with the established Iranian tradition, anything of this nature would be automatically attributed to British policy.

The Fourteenth Majlis was inaugurated on February 26, 1944. Its composition was predictably different from the previous one. The landowners were still the dominant force,

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65. Ibid.

66. FO to Tih-rān, Jan. 23, 1944. E 506/189/34, FO 371/40386.



composing almost fifty per cent of the members, but not necessarily united. The remaining percentage had been divided as follows: those who had been engaged in politics 23 per cent, in Law, journalism, and politics 13 percent, from commerce and industry 11 percent. The clergy represented only 3 per cent.<sup>67</sup>

## V

To everybody's, and probably to his own surprise, Suhailī survived through 1943. This was because he promised everything to everybody. He successfully overcame the crises over the budgeting of the army, and the problem of the press. As to the former, the Shāh, as noted earlier, wished to create a larger army with 108000 personnel. Given the coup de grâce by Millspaugh, Suhailī proposed to reduce the budget of the army by cutting down the personnel from 65000 to 30000. After a lengthy argument, the figure was set at 86,000 by General Ridley, the head of the American military mission.

The question of army and tax were always intermingled. Millspaugh's success in collecting taxes during the Riżā Shāh regime was directly due to the orderly and subservient society which existed under the shadow of the army. But the Shāh's

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67. The figures shown above are based on my own research. The criterion has been the main or known occupation of the deputies, though some practised several jobs. For a different interpretation see Zahra Shajī'i, Namāyandigān-i Majlis-i Shurāy-yi Millī dar Bīst-u-yik Daura-yi Qānūnguzārī, pp.180-267. Also see James Bill, The Politics of Iran pp.120-6. For an analytical list of the Majlis Deputies of the Fourteenth Majlis see Appendix Four.p. 603.

dislike of the stringency imposed by Millspaugh against the army was interpreted by Dreyfus in a different way: "the Shah is averse to Millspaugh's curtailment of army budget because this threatens his control of army on which his hopes of maintaining himself are based".<sup>68</sup>

Having experienced the unpleasant effect of the suppression of the press, Suhailī was reluctant to ban the papers, which attacked Riżā Shāh and called some personalities "the treacherous agents of the dictatorship (‘Ummāl-i Khā in-i diktātūrī). At last, under pressure from the Court, Suhailī suppressed several papers which had overstepped the mark in their criticism of royalty. To oppose undemocratic deeds by the Government, and to fight despotism, fourteen newspapers, mostly of the Left, handed themselves into what they called a Freedom Front (Jibha-yi Āzādī) in July 1943.<sup>69</sup> The main force behind this front was the Tūda Party. It was also alleged that the formation of the front had been instigated by Qavām.

In October, Suhailī tried to secure British and Russian consent to withdrawing their troops from Iran even before the end of the war. The Government argued that the situation in the country had changed; Iran had expelled all the Germans, declared war on Germany, and become a member of the United Nations.<sup>70</sup>

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68. Dreyfus to SOS, April 14, 1943. US.F.R., vol.IV.1943.p.522.

69. For the text of the manifesto of the Front see Damāvand, 2 Murdād, 1322 (July 24, 1943).

70. Memorandum of conversation by the Adviser on Political Relations (Murray), Nov.4,1943. US.F.R., vol.IV, 1943, pp.405-6.



This request was only overlooked by the concerned parties. But it seemed that the Shāh did not aspire to the withdrawal of the foreign troops at too early a date;<sup>71</sup> a desire totally in contrast with the expressed wishes of the Government. The American Chargé d'Affaires interpreted it thus; "it may indicate a fear on the Shāh's part that there would be danger of revolution if Iran were left to its own devices at this moment".<sup>72</sup>

Before the Government's request for troop withdrawal, Āhī, the Ambassador in Moscow, had called on the Soviet authorities to express the opinion that Iran was entitled, by the terms of the Tripartite Treaty, to be represented at the Moscow Conference, but had been told that no decision regarding Iran would be taken by the Conference.<sup>73</sup> True, the Conference did not take any decision but proposed that a Tripartite Declaration should be made at Tih̄rān at the conclusion of the Tih̄rān Conference on December 1, 1943.<sup>74</sup> The declaration, which was made in Tih̄rān, assured the Iranian Government of the Allies' "consideration" of economic assistance to Iran "at the close of hostilities". It pledged Iran's independence: "The Governments of the United States of America, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom are at one

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71. The Charge in Iran(Ford) to the SOS. Nove 10, 1943. Ibid,p.408.

72. Ibid.

73. George V.Allen, Member of the American Delegation to the Tripartite Conference of Foreign Ministers, to SOS, Nov.4, 1943. Ibid, p.401.

74. For the full account of the Moscow Conference and negotiations concerning the Tih̄rān Declaration see, Ibid,PP.400-5.



with the Government of Iran in their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Iran".<sup>75</sup>

The Declaration was received by the Iranian Government and the press with much enthusiasm. Its significance was that the United States had, for the first time, publicly and formally, declared its interest in the welfare and independence of Iran, and that the Soviet Union and Britain had renewed their old pledges to respect Iran's integrity and sovereignty. But the Russians soon lifted, though prematurely, the veil when the controversial Iranian problem, once more, appeared - oil concession.

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75. For the account of the Tihhrān Conference and the text of the declaration see A.H. Hamzavi, "Iran and the Tehran Conference", pp.192-203. Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, op.cit., pp.62-69. For documents concerning the conference and the declaration see US.F.R., The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943, index: Declaration on Iran, p.904